



NEW YORK STATE UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM
2021 ANNUAL REPORT





Supreme Court, New York County



New York State Unified Court System

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Report of the Chief Administrator of the Courts

for the Calendar Year January 1 through December 31, 2021

Janet DiFiore

Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and the State of New York

Lawrence K. Marks

Chief Administrative Judge of the State of New York

Associate Judges of the Court of Appeals

Jenny Rivera
Eugene M. Fahey
Michael J. Garcia
Rowan D. Wilson
Madeline Singas
Anthony Cannataro

Presiding Justices of the Appellate Division

Rolando T. Acosta
First Department
Hector D. LaSalle
Second Department
Elizabeth A. Garry
Third Department
Gerald J. Whalen
Fourth Department

Deputy Chief Administrative Judges

Deborah A. Kaplan
Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for the New York City Courts
Edwina G. Mendelson
Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives
Norman St. George
Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, Courts Outside New York City

New York State Unified Court System

Nancy J. Barry
Chief of Operations
Justin A. Barry
Chief of Administration
Eileen D. Millett
Counsel
Hon. Kathie E. Davidson
Dean, NYS Judicial Institute

Administrative Judges New York City

Deborah A. Kaplan
Civil Matters, First Judicial District
Ellen N. Biben
Criminal Matters, First Judicial District
Lawrence Knipel
Civil Matters, Second Judicial District
Matthew J. D'Emic
Criminal Matters, Second Judicial District
Marguerite A. Grays
Civil Matters, Eleventh Judicial District
George A. Grasso
Criminal Matters, Eleventh Judicial District
Doris Gonzalez
Civil Matters, Twelfth Judicial District
Alvin Yearwood
Criminal Matters, Twelfth Judicial District
Desmond A. Green
Civil & Criminal Matters, Thirteenth Judicial District

Anne-Marie Jolly
New York City Family Court
Tamiko Amaker
New York City Criminal Court
Carolyn Walker-Diallo
New York City Civil Court

Administrative Judges Outside New York City

Gerald W. Connolly
Third Judicial District
Felix J. Catena
Fourth Judicial District
James P. Murphy
Fifth Judicial District
Eugene D. Faughnan
Sixth Judicial District
William K. Taylor
Seventh Judicial District
Kevin M. Carter
Eighth Judicial District
Anne E. Minihan
Ninth Judicial District
Vito M. DeStefano
Tenth Judicial District, Nassau County
Andrew A. Crecca
Tenth Judicial District, Suffolk County
Richard E. Sise
Acting Presiding Judge, Court of Claims



Hon. Michael Smrtic presiding in the historic Fulton County Court, which dates to 1772 and is believed to be the longest continuously operating courthouse in the country.

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Broome County Courthouse



A MESSAGE FROM THE Chief Administrative Judge

The past two years have brought great upheaval to our personal and professional lives, our national and state economies and, of course, the operations of the New York State Unified Court System—one of the largest, busiest and most complex court systems in the world. Despite the unprecedented challenges, we remained open to meet the most basic justice needs of our citizens and went further to provide services, programs and initiatives that we believe are unmatched by any court system in the nation.

At the outset of the pandemic, our court system was compelled to reinvent itself nearly overnight as we adopted and then mastered virtual technology to safely manage our dockets and ensure access to justice in the broadest range of cases. Our virtual courts allowed us to achieve a productive “new normal” in the face of operational and safety challenges. We will continue to move toward full operations with continued expansion of our e-filing and electronic document delivery systems and our presumptive alternative dispute resolution program.

Unfortunately, and inevitably, pandemic-related backlogs continue, particularly in our high-volume courts. As we move forward, we will rely on the strategies and lessons of Chief Judge Janet DiFiore’s Excellence Initiative, through which, prior to the pandemic, we achieved dramatic success in reducing case backlogs and delays.

What we have accomplished, in the face of unprecedented circumstances, is nothing short of remarkable. We are prepared in 2022 to meet all challenges, expected and unexpected. We look forward to working with our partners in the justice system as we continue our quest for excellence.

Sincerely,

Lawrence K. Marks

This 2021 edition of the Annual Report of the Chief Administrator of the Courts has been submitted to the Governor and Legislature in accordance with Section 212 of the Judiciary Law.



Court of Appeals, Albany



“What really stands out for me when I look back on 2021 is the perseverance and the positive spirit of cooperation shown by our judges and staff, a positive spirit that never wavered as we dealt with the non-stop safety and operational challenges brought on by the different stages of the pandemic.”

Chief Judge DiFiore

Covid-19 and the Courts

The story of the court system’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic is summed up in one fact: throughout the unprecedented challenges, New York State’s courts have remained open, continuing to meet the needs of New Yorkers. In March 2020, non-essential court matters were postponed, essential and emergency matters were consolidated in fewer courthouses and cases were conducted by video and telephone. By April, however, the court system had begun its transition to a virtual model, made possible by a system-wide expansion of technological and e-filing capacity. This virtual court system was expanded steadily and became the new normal. Guided by safety protocols of screening, masks, social distancing and sanitizing, the court system also began a gradual, cautious return to in-person proceedings, which continued until a resurgence of the virus in the fall of 2020.

The 2021 story is one of successfully navigating the pressures and emerging variants of Covid-19, while continually expanding both virtual and in-person court capacity. The year began with great optimism-tempered by caution over the resurgence of the virus-as vaccines became available and confidence grew in the productivity of the virtual court system.

As the Covid-19 surge subsided, jury trials in civil and criminal cases restarted in March, full staffing returned to courthouses in May, in-person arraignments began in June and broader court operations resumed statewide in the summer. In 2021, despite the challenges of a second year of pandemic, the court system commenced over 2,000 jury trials and resolved nearly 1.8 million cases.

The health and safety of judges, court staff, lawyers, litigants and their families remained the primary focus of Covid-19 protocols. The court system encouraged judges and court staff to get the vaccination as soon as possible, providing time off for vaccine appointments and assistance in making the appointments. In partnership with New York City, pop-up vaccination sites were set up in and near courthouses.

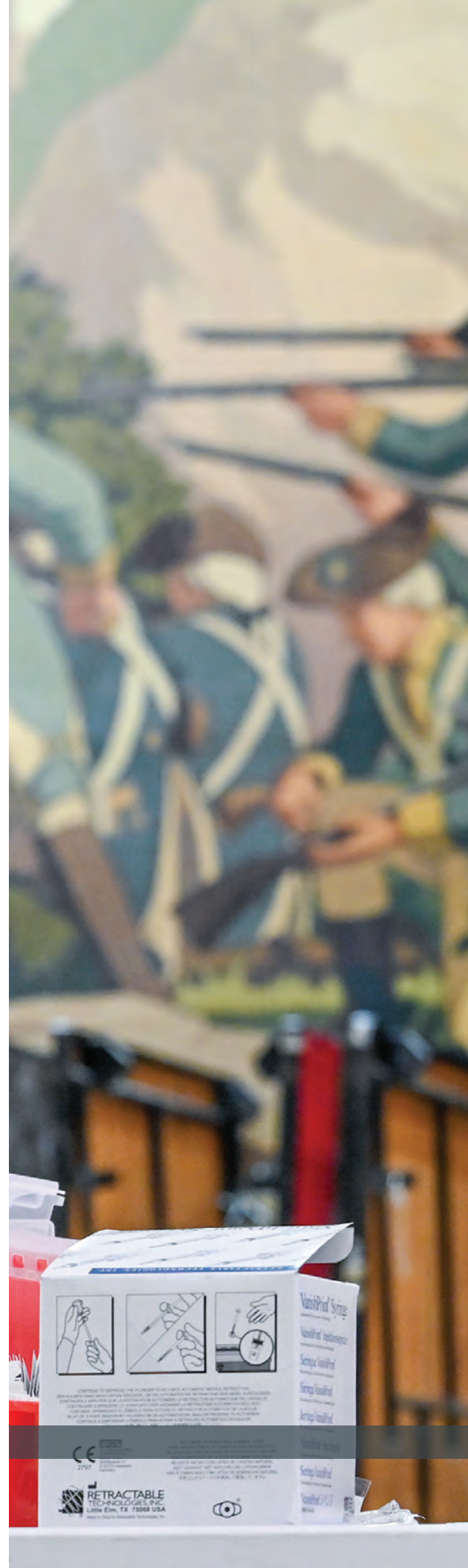
As Covid-19 rates declined in spring and summer, the courts’ mask requirement was modified for those who submitted proof of vaccination and in August, a mandatory testing protocol was imposed for those who had not.

In September, with FDA vaccine approval expanded to full authorization and variants of the virus posing potential new threats, the court system instituted a policy of mandatory vaccination, with limited exemptions, for all court employees. The vaccination mandate received an overwhelmingly positive response. Among judges, a near-perfect 99.7% are vaccinated or have received exemptions and are undergoing weekly Covid-19 tests. As of early 2022, of the 14,114 court staff, 13,353 are vaccinated and 608 have received exemptions and are undergoing weekly Covid-19 tests. The New York State court system's judges and staff comprise one of the most vaccinated workforces in the nation.

Despite persistent efforts, the pandemic left a backlog of cases that was particularly acute in family and criminal courts, and the court system responded with innovative approaches. To help address the backlog in child custody, visitation and guardianship matters in New York City Family Court, 45 Supreme Court Justices and Acting Supreme Court Justices volunteered to assist with these cases, which are outside their normal duties. In the early months of 2021, these judges heard over 700 matters, resolving nearly 300 of them and referring many to mediation. Through this initiative, hundreds of families were able to have these urgent matters heard and resolved.

In the criminal courts, the number of felony complaints awaiting grand jury action in New York City doubled over the previous year. The courts could not safely empanel grand juries in the early months of the pandemic, and could only gradually resume empaneling them as infection rates subsided. The resulting backlog of over 17,000 cases required a coordinated response. In January, working with the City's District Attorneys and other stakeholders, the court system created Unindicted Felony Parts, staffed by nine experienced Acting Supreme Court Justices. By May, these judges handled 12,740 cases and disposed of 4,883 of them.

New York saw Covid-19 surge in 2021, with the Delta variant driving an increase in infection rates beginning in August and the Omicron variant causing a severe spike in cases beginning in December. From the safety perspective, although many tested positive for the virus, the court system's workforce clearly benefitted from its high level of vaccination. On the operations side, the hybrid court model, now an integral aspect of the court system, enabled judges to continue to move cases forward by shifting from in-person to virtual proceedings as conditions changed. Through dedication, careful planning and methodical steps forward, the court system's judges and court staff ended 2021 on a note of great accomplishment, having successfully served the public through a second pandemic year.





A court employee is inoculated at a pop-up vaccination site at the Bronx County Courthouse.



“I am honored to lead a court system that has demonstrated its competence and commitment in meeting every challenge that has been heaped on us... all the while continuing our 244-year-old tradition of upholding the rule of law and protecting the people’s rights and liberties. And our work, indeed, continues.”

Chief Judge DiFiore

The Excellence Initiative

At her investiture in 2016, Chief Judge DiFiore established as the Unified Court System’s foremost priority the Excellence Initiative, a commitment to achieving operational and decisional excellence through continuing evaluation of all court processes and procedures to determine what is working well and what needs improvement. The Excellence Initiative recognizes the profound importance of timely and efficient adjudication of cases to the parties seeking justice in our courts and public confidence in the justice system.

At the onset of the pandemic, the Excellence Initiative had achieved dramatic reductions in case backlogs and delays throughout the state. During the pandemic, the definition of excellence and the benchmarks used to measure it necessarily changed. With courthouses temporarily unable to conduct many kinds of in-person proceedings for health and safety reasons, the court system transformed to an entirely new and virtual model of court operations to meet the demand for its services. This virtual court system permitted courts to expand from initially handling only emergency and essential matters to conducting virtual appearances, conferences, hearings and non-jury trials in all matters. At the same time as the court system was developing its virtual model, it gradually resumed in-person proceedings and has significantly expanded court operations, applying the lessons and principles of the Excellence Initiative to efficiently manage its dockets and clear away the backlogs that inevitably developed over the course of the pandemic.

Court Simplification

New York’s court system is one of the largest and busiest in the world, with typically 3 million filings a year heard in over 300 courthouses in 62 counties by more than 3,000 state and local judges assisted by a court staff of 15,000. The complex job of managing this system is made immeasurably more difficult by the fact that New York’s court structure is the most complex, inefficient and outdated in our nation, with 11 distinct trial courts. This structure has not been updated since 1962, and the need for court simplification is urgent.

The impact of this obsolete structure is felt disproportionately in the high-volume courts that serve New Yorkers of limited means, those who are dealing with eviction, child custody and support, consumer debt and other critical matters. Vulnerable families with divorce, child custody, child support and domestic violence issues, for example, must appear in different courts before different judges, resulting in more lost work time, more childcare and transportation expenses, more frustration and stress and, inevitably, less confidence in the courts and the justice system.

“The need to modernize our court system has never been more urgent, not only to remedy decades-old inequities embedded within our organizational structure but also to enable us to efficiently operationalize and give full and timely effect to the important reform policies that our colleagues in the Legislative and Executive branches of government have fought so hard to enact.”

Chief Judge DiFiore

Three respected jurists and leaders of the bar with extensive experience in these courts commented in a 2021 article that during the pandemic, New York’s “wasteful and balkanized” system led to “radically different experiences for litigants depending on their racial, economic and geographic backgrounds.” A joint report in early 2022 by the New York City Bar Association and the Fund for Modern Courts catalogued the adverse impact of Covid-19 on litigants in the New York Family Court and called for reforms including court simplification.

The time for reform for the benefit of all New Yorkers, but particularly for the most vulnerable, is now.

The court system has submitted a proposal to the Legislature that would amend Article VI of New York State’s Constitution to create a modern, streamlined court system consisting of:

1. A single statewide Supreme Court into which the Court of Claims, County Court, Family Court and Surrogate’s Court will be merged over a three-year period, beginning January 1, 2025;
2. A single statewide Municipal Court into which the New York City Civil and Criminal Courts, the Nassau and Suffolk District Courts and 61 upstate City Courts will be merged, effective January 1, 2030; and
3. The Town and Village Justice Courts, which will not be affected by our proposal.

This consolidation of nine different trial courts into a two-tiered Supreme Court and Municipal Court structure would not change the means by which the judges in those nine courts are presently selected for office.

The proposal would also eliminate the 97-year-old Constitutional cap on the number of Supreme Court Justices and permit the Legislature to create a sufficient number of Justices to handle the Court’s caseload. Further, the proposal would authorize the Legislature to adjust the number of Appellate Division Departments, for the first time since 1894, to correct the imbalance that exists now, with the Second Department accounting for approximately one-half of the State’s population and one-half of the State’s appellate caseload.

The court simplification proposal will be introduced in the Legislature in 2022. First passage of court reform in 2022, followed by second passage in 2023 and a voter referendum in November 2023, would enable New York State to begin simplifying and transforming its court system as early as 2025.



Left to right: Karen Kane, Director of Court Research; Brandon Koch, Network/Systems Engineer II; Alan Simms, Senior Technical Manager; Hassan Alkurabi, Senior Technical Manager; Jason Hill, Senior Technical Manager; Christine Sisario, Director of Technology.

Technology

The Division of Technology and Court Research (DoTCR) provides information processing and technology services for New York's court system. During the pandemic, DoTCR was critical to the establishment of the virtual model that permitted the court system to function and provide vital services to New Yorkers. In addition, DoTCR performed critical tasks that affected all aspects of the work of the courts, including:

- **Automated Court Notifications:** Sent out multiple automated notifications, including 500,000 mailings notifying litigants about their eviction cases and Covid-19 policies and assistance; over 200,000 mailings, 100,000 texts and 90,000 voice mails in bail related appearances; and 43,000 mail notices extending deadlines for the expiration of temporary orders of protection.
- **Cyber Security:** Established the Security Operations Center to monitor and enhance the court system's response to cyber threats; introduced mandatory training for judges and court staff to increase security awareness.
- **Statistical Dashboards:** In response to recent legislation, developed online reports on data that included judicial demographics, arraignments, tracking of criminal case statistics, and activities of pre-trial services agencies.
- **Virtual Court Appearances:** Added functionality to all case management systems to collect virtual information when scheduling meetings and conference calls; enhanced attorneys' ability to upload evidence files.
- **Automated Jury Communication Enhancements:** Added a juror specific scannable QR barcode to the juror qualification questionnaire to establish and build relationships with potential jurors, increasing the number of jurors who complete their qualification questionnaire online for greater efficiency and cost savings.
- **Automated ADA Accommodation Requests:** Expanded the ability of the public to submit online ADA accommodation requests, replacing the prior manual process of emailing requests to courts.
- **Automated Certificate of Good Standing Submissions:** Enabled attorneys to submit online requests for a certificate of good standing to Appellate Division Departments statewide. The new process replaces the prior manual processes of mailing a form, handling requests, and generation of a paper certificate.
- **Automated Online Payments for Criminal Fines and Fees:** Implemented online payments for criminal fines and fees for all upstate and downstate city and district courts, including all of NYC Criminal Court.
- **Covid-19 Policies:** Developed the court system's online management of proof of vaccination, testing, exemption requests and reviews.
- **Eviction and Foreclosure Legislation:** Adjusted the case management system used in local civil courts in response to legislation addressing evictions and foreclosures, to account for new information including hardship declarations and matters arising under the Emergency Protect Our Small Businesses Act and the Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

e-Filing

Since New York courts began implementing e-filing more than two decades ago, nearly 4.3 million cases have been commenced via New York Courts Electronic Filing (NYSCEF) and more than 48.5 million documents have been filed.

The court system's goal of further expanding e-filing became more urgent in the Covid-19 pandemic. In courts where NYSCEF is not fully authorized, an Electronic Document Delivery System (EDDS) was implemented in 2020. While not as broadly functional as NYSCEF, EDDS is a delivery system that makes documents available to the court and is now available in over 340 individual courts. Since its inception, over 1.53 million documents have been transmitted through EDDS. Like NYSCEF, EDDS has minimized the number of people entering courthouses to file and submit papers.

In the courts where the NYSCEF system is fully functional, the now 23-plus year "experiment" has proven extremely successful. Currently, e-filing is in use in Supreme Court, Civil Term, in 61 of New York's 62 counties, and in Surrogate's Court in 62 counties. E-filing is available in all Departments of the Appellate Division; in New York City Civil Court for no-fault claims; in Housing Court in all boroughs of New York City; and in the Court

of Claims for all matters. Additionally, a Virtual Evidence Courtroom was created for hearings and trials in matters that have been e-filed for parties to have the ability to send evidence to the court remotely via NYSCEF.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

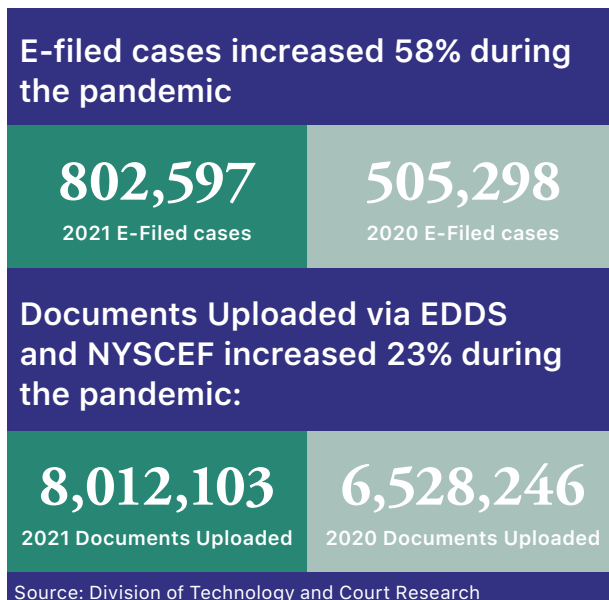
"Virtually every program for early ADR that the court system has initiated as part of Chief Judge DiFiore's ADR Initiative has yielded exceptionally high settlement rates, enabling parties to resolve their disputes far more quickly and less expensively and confirming an enormous under-appreciated public appetite for these efficient alternatives to long, difficult and expensive litigation."

John S. Kiernan, chair of the Chief Judge's ADR Advisory Committee.

Presumptive ADR

The Presumptive Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program, a statewide initiative in which most civil cases will be referred to ADR for an early opportunity to resolve matters, has been an important part of the Chief Judge's Excellence Initiative. The Presumptive ADR Program provides a vehicle for parties to resolve their disputes in an efficient, cost effective manner.

The Presumptive ADR Program involves close collaboration and coordination with Deputy Chief Administrative Judges, District Administrative Judges, the Division of Technology and Court Research, regional and local ADR coordinators, the Statewide Coordinating Judge for Matrimonial Matters and the Statewide ADR Office to provide technical assistance to local courts, increase and optimize referrals to ADR, and implement the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.





Hon. Michele Rodney swears in Grand Jurors in New York County Supreme Criminal.

Online Dispute Resolution

Manhattan's Civil Court has introduced an online dispute resolution pilot program for eligible small claims matters. Funded by the State Justice Institute and AAA-ICDR Foundation, the new initiative is among the Court System's statewide efforts to expand the use both of alternative dispute resolution and online technology to better meet the justice needs of New Yorkers amid the pandemic and beyond. The Manhattan pilot is designed to assist unrepresented parties in managing and resolving matters involving disputes related to the purchase or sale of goods or services, with a monetary limit up to \$10,000.

Training

The Statewide ADR Office partners with the NYS Judicial Institute, judicial leaders, regional and local ADR staff, bar groups, dispute resolution groups, Community Dispute Resolution Centers, federal court ADR program directors, law schools and other stakeholders to train judicial and non-judicial court staff and diverse neutrals.

Equal Justice in the Courts

“One of the most powerful ways that we as judges and lawyers can support and advance the rule of law is by assuring all New Yorkers that the promise of equal justice under law is alive and well, and that every individual who enters one of our courthouses will be treated with equal justice, dignity and respect — regardless of who they are or where they come from in life.”

Chief Judge DiFiore

Special Advisor on Equal Justice in the Courts

In 2020, Chief Judge DiFiore appointed attorney Jeh Johnson as Special Adviser on Equal Justice in the Courts to coordinate a comprehensive, independent review of the court system to help identify and eliminate any and all forms of racism, bias and disparate treatment of our colleagues and court users. Secretary Johnson—a partner at Paul, Weiss and former U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security—issued a thorough report, with a series of recommendations. The Chief Judge then named Hon. Edwina G. Mendelson, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives, to lead the courts’ day-to-day efforts to implement the Equal Justice recommendations.

In November, Chief Judge DiFiore released a detailed report documenting the enormous strides made over the past year toward a court system that is a model of fairness, equity and inclusion, beginning with her commitment to achieve a policy of “zero tolerance” for racial bias and discrimination. Reforms that have been implemented, are underway or are in the planning stages include:

- Mandated comprehensive racial bias training for all judges and nonjudicial staff.
- A new “Mission Statement for the Unified Court System” that incorporates principles of equity, diversity and inclusion.
- A new “Social Media Policy” with clear guidelines and boundaries on what constitutes biased and prohibited conduct.
- Creation of Equal Justice Committees comprised of judges and court staff working in every Judicial District, including New York City, to implement equal justice reforms at the local court level in order to change our institutional culture from the bottom up.
- Targeted changes in our Human Resources promotional interview practices to effectuate our commitment to diversity and inclusion in our workforce.
- The production and display of a new orientation video to educate every juror about the dangers of implicit bias and ensure fair decision-making free of biases or stereotypes.



Hon. Edwina G. Mendelson, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives.

“This is multilayered, multifaceted and it’s going to be a multi-year endeavor – this is not one and done. Those of us working on this project owe the highest level of commitment and insistence on excellence – to each other and the communities we serve.”

Hon. Edwina G. Mendelson

- A new requirement of a full disciplinary hearing for substantiated claims of discrimination.
- New and improved processes in the Office of the Inspector General to facilitate the filing of racial bias and discrimination claims, including the appointment of an ombudsperson to promptly handle complaints.
- Improved availability and transparency of data for those interested in reviewing both our progress on diversity in the courts, and the impact of the criminal justice system on people of color.
- A series of programs and initiatives, including the wearing of nametags by Court Officers, designed to foster trust between Court Officers and the communities we serve.

The 2021 Year in Review report is available online at: <https://www.nycourts.gov/LegacyPDFS/publications/2021-Equal-Justice-Review.pdf>

Office of Diversity and Inclusion

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), provides resources to judicial and non-judicial personnel on diversity-related matters and identifies and develops practical mechanisms through which the court system attempts to ensure a diverse workforce and bias-free work environment. In pursuing its objective

of ensuring an atmosphere where all people feel comfortable, valued and productive, ODI regularly works with other UCS offices and commissions such as the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission, the Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission, the Inspector General's Bias Unit and the New York State Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts.

“Historically, increasing diversity has been a challenge in rural districts like the 6th, but we have made significant progress through outreach and education. Our Administrative Judges are committed to educating the public about employment opportunities in the court system and support community outreach and recruitment efforts that encourage diverse candidates to apply. This commitment at the top has been essential to our progress in diversifying our workforce.”

Porter Kirkwood, Sixth Judicial District Executive



Porter Kirkwood, District Executive in the Sixth Judicial District, which covers the Southern Tier.



The Appellate Division, First Department, held its first-ever oral arguments with an all-Latino panel, on December 9, 2021. Appellate Division Justices, left to right, Hon. Manuel J. Mendez; Hon. Sallie Manzanet-Daniels; Hon. Rolando T. Acosta, Presiding Justice; Hon. Lizbeth González and Hon. Julio Rodríguez II.

In 2021, ODI:

- Updated its mission statement to reflect and emphasize its shared firm commitment to promoting diversity at all levels.
- Held its first Diversity Summit, providing 1,800-plus employee participants with an overview of UCS policies regarding race, equity and bias, the process for implementing the Special Adviser's recommendations, and the various roles and resources of UCS offices.
- Sponsored a monthly series of "Diversity Dialogue" podcast interviews in which employees of various backgrounds discussed their path, their career and the importance of maintaining an inclusive workforce.
- Networked with fraternal and affinity organizations.
- Launched a newsletter, "Mosaic," dedicated to building understanding and appreciation of the need for diversity within the court system.
- Developed a Diversity and Inclusion guide and anti-bias resources for court personnel, litigants and partner organizations.
- Added Asian American and Pacific Islander Month to cultural theme-month programs, such as Black History, Hispanic Heritage, LGBTQ Pride and Disability Awareness.

For more information, visit: <https://ww2.nycourts.gov/careers/diversity/index.shtml>



On November 9, 2021, the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission celebrated the contributions of its members and leaders over the past 30 years.

Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission

The Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission, co-chaired by then-Appellate Division, Fourth Department Justice Shirley Troutman and Appellate Division, First Department, Justice Troy K. Webber, is the first court-based entity in the United States committed to racial and ethnic fairness in the courts.

The Commission was exceptionally busy in 2021 as it celebrated its 30th anniversary and held numerous programs aimed at dismantling racism in the courts, raising awareness and bringing to the forefront instances of inequity. Chief Judge

DiFiore issued a proclamation declaring the 22nd day of October 2021, “Franklin H. Williams Day,” on the occasion of what would have been Ambassador Williams’ 104th birthday.

In June, the Commission posted excerpts of oral history interviews with several of the founders of the Commission, which were recorded in preparation for the Commission’s award-winning documentary on Ambassador Williams, “A Bridge to Justice.” The documentary will be shown on hundreds of PBS stations in at least 40 states in 2022.



“There was a perception of inequality, lack of diversity, both on the bench, as well as the quality of justice the minorities were receiving in the system... The perception of injustice within minority communities is still there. And that perception is going to take a lot of time to overcome.”

Anthony Suarez, original member of the Commission.



“It was commonplace for the court officers to be more aggressive, to treat the people who came into the court with a lack of respect... Some Black judges would feel that the court officers would not respect or defer to them as they would do to a white judge. They simply would not treat them, respect them, as they would respect their white colleagues.”

Hon. Lewis Douglass, original member and chair of the Commission.



“It wasn’t about Blacks only. It was about poor people. The ‘ghetto courts’ used primarily by poor and Black and brown and minority litigants were in disastrous shape, whereas the courts for the more wealthy... were more elegant, more comfortable, more appropriate for the treatment of people in general, where you’re in a building of justice.”

Hon. Juanita Bing Newton, original member of the Commission.



“The court is supposed to be fair and impartial and as a judge, you’re supposed to be fair and impartial, but that certainly was not the perception, or maybe the reality of it throughout the state... We’ve done a lot, but not enough.”

Hon. Dorothy Chin-Brandt, original member of the Commission.



“The legacy is that we have a Commission that now is really proactive in terms of trying to promote minorities, trying to recruit minorities and certainly keep them within the system. And I think, you know, it starts at the top. The leadership has to set the tone... We have a Commission that’s active and hopefully the Commission will be in existence for many years to come because there’s still a need.”

Hon. Rose Sconiers, former Commission chair.

For more information, visit: <http://ww2.nycourts.gov/ip/ethnic-fairness/index.shtml>



Hon. Betty Weinberg Ellerin (Ret.), left and Hon. Sherry Klein Heitler.

NYS Judicial Commission on Women in the Courts

“We’ve come quite a way, not far enough. We still have a way to go. And we are not giving up. We believe in a truly fair and equitable system of justice at every level. And that means women are entitled to that same standard as are their counterparts.”

Hon. Betty Weinberg Ellerin

The Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts works to secure equal justice, equal treatment and equal opportunity in the courts. Working within the New York court system, the Committee addresses a variety of concerns of women litigants, attorneys and court employees. In recent years, it has acted on behalf of constituencies that range from domestic violence victims to immigrant women, and from sexually harassed employees to self-represented matrimonial litigants. The committee was instrumental in the creation of a statewide network of human trafficking intervention courts.

Gender Fairness Committees

As part of the court system’s continuing commitment to gender equity, 24 local gender bias and gender fairness committees around the state address gender fairness issues, conducting public awareness and continuing legal education programs on workplace issues, health and well-being and community outreach. Despite the pandemic, the local committees were active and vibrant during 2021.

For more information visit: <http://ww2.nycourts.gov/ip/womeninthecourts/index.shtml>

Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission

Bearing the name of a jurist who pioneered advocacy for LGBTQ rights throughout his career, the Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission is dedicated to promoting equal participation and access throughout the court system by all persons regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. In furtherance of that mission, the Commission in 2021:

- Created a Continuing Legal Education program for the New York State Bar Association covering the legal history of obstacles to open LGBTQ service in the U.S. Armed Forces and cultural competency for representing LGBTQ veterans.
- Coordinated a seminar for the NYS Judicial Institute on the questions presented and potential outcomes in *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia*, the same-sex foster parent case decided by the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Organized a Pride Month tribute to the late Judge Paul Feinman, the first openly gay judge on the New York Court of Appeals and a founding member of the Failla Commission, after he passed away in March 2021.

“Being gay in the Unified Court System, for me, has been a very liberating experience... It’s been a very wonderful experience working for a court system that had sexual orientation protected well before SONDA (The Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act) had come about.”

Ronald Pawelczak, Seventh Judicial District Executive



Ronald Pawelczak , District Executive, Seventh Judicial District



Members of the Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission visit the historical marker for Bob Uplinger, a gay man arrested in Buffalo and charged with propositioning another man. Left to right: Matthew Skinner, Executive Director; Hon. Joanne Winslow and Hon. Anthony Cannataro, Co-Chairs; Andrea Conjerti, an attorney and member of the Failla Commission and Hon. Grace Hanlon.

- Partnered with the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on a virtual Pride Month conversation with America's first Black, Afro-Latino and openly gay members of Congress, Rep. Mondair Jones and Rep. Ritchie Torres.
- Analyzed the evolution of LGBTQ public policy over the past decade for a virtual program with the LGBT Bar Association of New York.
- Joined a coalition of advocates from around the state to prepare the court system and the bar for implementation of the Gender Recognition Act, a bill that made it easier and safer for transgender and nonbinary New Yorkers to update their identity documents.

For more information, visit: <http://ww2.nycourts.gov/ip/LGBTQ/index.shtml>

Managing Inspector General for Bias Matters

The Inspector General's Office is responsible for the investigation and elimination of infractions of disciplinary standards, criminal activities, conflicts of interest, misconduct, misfeasance and incompetence on the part of nonjudicial employees of the UCS, and persons or corporations doing business with the UCS, with respect to their dealings with the courts.

A specialized unit within the office of the Inspector General—the Office of the Managing Inspector General for Bias Matters— investigates allegations of bias based upon race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, domestic violence status, prior criminal record, age, marital status, disability, national origin or religion that affect the workplace or the terms and conditions of employment of UCS personnel.

Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy

The Chief Judge in 2021 issued an anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policy applicable to all non-judicial and judicial personnel prohibiting conduct and communications, including electronic and social media communications, that demean, disparage or harass others based on race, sex, gender identity and other personal attributes.

The new policy, which can be found at <https://www.nycourts.gov/whatsnew/pdf/UCS-AntiDiscrim-AntiHarass.pdf>, requires a full disciplinary hearing in all claims of discriminatory conduct by a court system employee that are investigated and substantiated by the Inspector General.

Additionally, where a hearing officer sustains a charge of discriminatory conduct, the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge responsible for reviewing the hearing officer's findings will consult with a newly established special panel consisting of the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for the courts inside or outside New York City, the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for

Justice Initiatives and the Director of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The special panel will advise on the appropriate penalty to be imposed where charges of discrimination have been sustained in order to ensure statewide consistency of discipline.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law prohibiting discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. As defined by the statute, a person with a disability is one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. The Unified Court System is committed to fully complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act by providing services, programs and activities in a way that assures equal and full accessibility for all court users. District Executives and NYC Chief Clerks are entrusted with assisting litigants, jurors, attorneys and other court users in obtaining the accommodations needed to ensure that they can meaningfully participate in the justice system.

For more information, visit: <http://ww2.nycourts.gov/Accessibility/index.shtml>



Left to right, Lillian M. Moy, Executive Director, Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York; Phillip Burse, CEO, In Our Own Voices, Inc.; Benjamin Kose, Court Officer; and at Implicit Bias Training session in Castleton-On-Hudson.

A photograph of a wooden double door. The door is made of dark-stained wood with a vertical grain. At the top, there is a transom window divided into five rectangular panes. The left pane shows a ceiling light fixture. Below the transom, each door leaf has a white rectangular plaque. The left plaque has the word 'CITY' in blue, serif, all-caps font. The right plaque has the word 'COURT' in the same font. Below the plaques, there are two vertical brass-colored metal plates, one on each leaf, which are part of the door's locking mechanism. The door is set within a wooden frame. On the far left and right sides of the frame, there are dark metal hinges or handles.

CITY

COURT

Access to Justice

“While remote technology has put us in a good position to deliver services during the pandemic, we are keenly aware of the significant ‘digital divide’ facing many New Yorkers who cannot access our virtual courts because they lack what so many of us take for granted: digital broadband and Wi-Fi capacity, adequate data plans and smartphone minutes, and basic computer equipment.”

Chief Judge DiFiore

Fairness and access in New York’s court system are goals that inform all areas of the work of the courts. The Covid-19 pandemic had a disproportionate impact on low-income New Yorkers and communities of color, amplifying legal problems such as eviction, consumer debt, child custody and support, and domestic violence.

The court system’s move to virtual courts provided both an opportunity and a challenge. Encouraging reports emerged of the benefits of remote technology in connecting low-income litigants to court resources and legal service providers. At the same time, the reality and extent of the digital divide was made clear. Many of the court users who need these resources the most are unable to access them because they lack computer equipment, high speed WIFI, smartphones or adequate data plans.

Addressing the Digital Divide

Despite the best efforts of legal service providers, the pandemic increased and intensified the legal problems facing low-income New Yorkers. The court system is working with stakeholders to bridge that digital divide with initiatives like the “Faith-Based Remote Access Centers.”

Following the success of 2020 pilot programs in Westchester County, Third Judicial District Administrative Judge Gerald Connolly in May announced an innovative initiative that aims to narrow the digital divide, enabling Albany area residents who lack a home computer or reliable internet to participate in virtual court proceedings, e-file court documents and connect remotely to court and free legal services from a secure site in their local neighborhood.

The Third Judicial District’s Community Court Access program is modeled after a faith-based access-to-justice initiative launched in 2020 in the Ninth Judicial District, the Faith-Based Court Access program. This program is designed to provide safe, secure and private remote access to the court system for those who lack the resources or need “safe haven space” to participate in legal proceedings. Houses of worship are providing computer equipment and trained staff to enable virtual connections into the court system.

The Third Judicial District partnered with Riverview Missionary Baptist Church in Coeymans, Albany County, where Dr. Rev. Roxanne Booth provided office space for the computer station. The computer equipment was generously donated by Grace Community Development Corporation, a community organization affiliated with Grace Baptist Church of Mount Vernon, one of the churches providing a similar remote access location for court users in the 9th Judicial District.



In June, working with partners in local government and the faith-based, not-for-profit and legal communities, Fifth Judicial District Administrative Judge James P. Murphy introduced the Virtual Court Access Program. Syracuse area residents who lack the tools to participate in virtual court matters can connect with the courts in any of six locations, including the Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and Interfaith Works. Each site is equipped with a computer, microphone, scanner and printer. Volunteers provide technical assistance and ensure that the court system's Covid-19 safety protocols are observed.

Judiciary Civil Legal Services

The Judiciary Civil Legal Services (JCLS) Division of the Office for Justice Initiatives is responsible for programmatic leadership and oversight of the JCLS program. In September 2021, the court system awarded approximately \$85 million to 82 JCLS grantees for the provision of direct civil legal services and access to justice services to address the vital legal needs of low-income New Yorkers.

JCLS funding, which is approved by the Governor and Legislature, provides low-income New Yorkers with meaningful access to the courts and the legal assistance they need to secure the essentials of life, such as housing, family matters, access to healthcare and education and subsistence income. This critical initiative benefits millions of New Yorkers each year. JCLS funding priorities are enhanced by public hearings on the civil legal needs of New Yorkers held by the Chief Judge each year. The findings of those hearings are then reported to the Governor and Legislature.



Attending the opening of the Faith Based Initiative in Coeymans, Albany County, were left to right: Dr. Rev. Roxanne Booth, Pastor of the Riverview Baptist Church; Hon. Richard Rivera, Albany County Family Court Judge; Rev. Antonio Booth, Pastor of Riverview Baptist Church and Hon. Gerald Connolly, Administrative Judge, Third Judicial District.

Public Access Terminal Court Hubs

Through its computer centers called Public Access Terminal Court Hubs ("PATCH"), the Brownsville Community Justice Center in Brooklyn connects the public to court clerks, so that they can ask questions on housing and family court matters, respond to papers, seek an order of protection, and get helpful information and resources.

Help Centers

Help Centers are neutral locations for court users to obtain information about the law and court procedure. Staffed by non-judicial court personnel, they often have DIY Form Program terminals available for people to access. In 2020, many Help Centers pivoted to a virtual model in response to Covid-19, and in 2021, began to resume in-person assistance. In the first half of 2021, it is estimated that more than 67,000 court users benefitted from Help Center services.

In August 2021, three new Help Centers were opened in the 6th Judicial District, in Broome, Chemung and Tompkins counties. The Help Centers will provide free information about the law and court procedure to people without an attorney. In addition, court forms, sample documents and referrals will be available.

Public Access Terminal Court Hub

Brownsville Community Justice Center will offer direct access kiosks to housing and family court.



Civil Matters

- ✓ Asking housing questions to Court Clerks
- ✓ Respond to court papers
- ✓ Housing court case information and resources

Tuesday 11am-3pm
Wednesday 1pm-3pm

Family Matters

- ✓ Order of Protection
- ✓ Family court case information and resources

Monday 11am- 3pm
Wednesday 11am- 1pm

**650 Rockaway Avenue,
Brooklyn, NY 11212**

Brownsville Community Justice Center

Virtual Court Navigator Program

In June, the Office of Justice Initiatives partnered with John Jay College to launch a "Virtual Court Navigator Pilot" with students from the school's public service "APPLE Corps." The students receive training and supervision from court staff and assist unrepresented litigants in virtual courts with child support, custody and visitation, divorce, housing and estate matters. The Virtual Navigators guide litigants through their virtual appearances, help them complete necessary forms and connect them to essential services and resources.



Attending the opening of the Fifth Judicial District's Virtual Court Access Program at the Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ in Syracuse, were left to right: Donald C. Doerr, Fifth Judicial District Executive; Jean Marie Westlake, attorney; Pastor Alberta Abrams; Hon. James P. Murphy, Administrative Judge, Fifth Judicial District; Tonya Younis, Deputy Chief Clerk of Onondaga County Family Court; Olive Sephuma, Vice President/Chief Operating Officer, Interfaith Works of CNY; Adol Mayen, Pro Bono Coordinator, Volunteer Lawyers Project of Onondaga County, Inc. and Colby Ward, Interfaith Works of CNY.

Guardian Ad Litem Program

The Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) Program recruits, trains and provides NYC Housing Court Judges with a pool of GALs whose goal is to protect the rights and prevent the eviction of litigants who are unable to advocate for themselves due to age or mental health challenges. In 2021, the Office for Justice Initiatives' Access to Justice Division provided Westchester City Court Judges and Ninth Judicial District Town and Village Court Judges training on GAL appointments in landlord-tenant matters. It also provided Westchester City Courts with programmatic guidance to support the creation of a Westchester GAL Pilot Program for the benefit of impaired litigants appearing in Westchester County City Courts.

Volunteer Programs

The court system utilizes volunteer lawyers to address civil legal needs in a variety of ways:

- In May 2021, the New York City Family Court Volunteer Attorney Program moved to a remote (video and telephonic) program providing consultations to unrepresented individuals in custody/visitation, support, guardianship, and family offense case.
- In collaboration with the New York City Bar Justice Center's Civil Court Project, the Office for Justice Initiatives' Civil Court Volunteer Lawyer Program expanded citywide in August 2021 to offer free online and phone consultations to people who do not have an attorney representing them in New York City Civil Court.

Permanent Commission on Access to Justice

The Permanent Commission on Access to Justice, chaired by Helaine Barnett, is charged with studying and developing recommendations to improve access to civil legal services for low-income New Yorkers. The Commission supports the Chief Judge's annual statewide

hearing to assess the unmet needs for civil legal representation in matters involving fundamental human needs.

In 2021, the Commission focused on the digital divide facing court users, and launched a Court User survey to measure litigants' experiences with court processes and technology necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the Commission made recommendations that would simplify litigation for court users, including replacing the notarization requirement with an affirmation; simplifying and expanding the New York State Courts Electronic Filing System (NYSCEF); linking the DIY Form programs with the court system's case management system for one-click filing; and deeming an electronic signature sufficient for online filings by unrepresented litigants. The Commission established two new working groups with specific missions. The Housing Working Group studied the role of guardians ad litem in landlord-tenant matters; the right to counsel in eviction cases; the use of housing specialty parts outside New York City; and the development of statewide, uniform, plain-language landlord-tenant forms. The Commission's Race and Gender Equity Working Group focused on the role of legal services providers in expanding diversity and inclusion within their organizations.

The Commission is committed to ensuring meaningful access to justice for all New Yorkers, collaborating on access to justice issues and expanding pro bono services for unrepresented litigants.

For more information, visit: <https://ww2.nycourts.gov/accesstojusticecommission/index.shtml>

Business Council for Access to Justice

The Business Council for Access to Justice was established by Chief Judge DiFiore in 2020 to provide strategic advice and support on critical initiatives, from educating the business sector on the importance of policies supporting equal access to justice, to fostering pro bono service by corporate counsel, to partnering with legal

service providers on specific projects designed to close the access-to-justice gap in low-income communities.

In 2021, Business Council members provided pro bono assistance to low-income clients in New York City and the Hudson Valley facing housing issues, including assistance with Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) applications. The Business Council promoted this pro bono work among corporate and law firm attorneys, with 250 volunteer lawyers participating in free ERAP clinics for clients of Legal Services NYC. Legal Services of the Hudson Valley is supporting over 50 volunteer lawyers who have received training in landlord-tenant and Covid-19 housing issues.

The work of the Business Council serves to complement the efforts of the Permanent Commission on Access to Justice. Led by Commission member Kimberley D. Harris, Executive Vice President and General Counsel of NBCUniversal, and Eric F. Grossman, Managing Director and Chief Legal Officer of Morgan Stanley, the Business Council is a diverse group of experienced business leaders.

For more information, visit: <https://ww2.nycourts.gov/accesstojusticecommission/bc.shtml>

Language Access

With over five million people speaking languages other than English in their homes, New York State's diverse population requires a robust language interpreting program to serve court

users. The court system has 253 interpreters on staff and provides free interpreting services in over 200 languages. In 2021, interpreters covered over 51,000 appearances in 112 languages and provided, in person or remotely, language access to over 164,000 court users. The Office of Language Access (OLA) maintains a registry of over 1,500 credentialed per diem interpreters representing more than 200 languages. The per diem registry is an invaluable resource for the courts, enabling OLA staff to provide needed interpreters to cover heavy court calendars, and to offer less frequently requested languages when needed.

In response to the pandemic, the Office reviewed translations of Covid-19 notices and other materials for the court system website to ensure their accuracy.

Translation services have been provided for communications with a wide range of court users about Covid-19-related issues, and for promulgation of legislatively mandated court forms, such as the "Residential Hardship Declaration Eviction and Foreclosure Notice" distributed to tens of thousands of tenants in our Housing Courts earlier this year. This form was translated into 19 different languages, with much of the work performed in-house by our skilled OLA professionals.

In 2015, the court system started a pilot in which the Family Court in New York City, Westchester County and Monroe County issued Spanish/English bilingual Orders of Protection. Since then, the orders have been expanded to three more languages and to the Family Courts statewide and to the Integrated Domestic Violence courts. The orders are now available in Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian. Plans are in progress to expand the Order of Protection languages to include Bengali, Burmese, French, Haitian Creole, Karen, Korean, Polish and Somali.





Otsego County Court, Cooperstown

Criminal Justice

“With the recent rise in gun cases in courts throughout the five boroughs, this citywide initiative will help ensure that these important cases are resolved as swiftly and effectively as possible.”

Chief Administrative Judge Marks

Gun Crimes

As a spike in shootings and gun arrests occurred in New York City, the court system collaborated with the City’s District Attorneys and other partner agencies to address both the steady stream of new cases and the pandemic-related backlog of 4,000 cases. The resulting initiative, announced in August 2021 and expanded in early 2022, focuses on cases in which the top charge is criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, a felony gun charge.

Addressing pandemic related constraints on court operations, the initiative includes increasing the number of grand juries and designating teams of judges in each borough to work together to expedite pre-trial hearings and preside over pleas and trials. The court system is communicating with prosecutors, the defense bar and the Department of Correction to ensure that all justice partners are working effectively to resolve these cases fairly, appropriately and promptly. The progress and outcomes are being closely monitored.

The number of top-count gun cases pending in Criminal Court by January 2022 had gone down by nearly 50%, even with an inflow of 1,200 new arraignments. In Supreme Court, which saw its numbers increase as top-count gun cases were transferred following indictment, there were over 700 dispositions, including 75% by plea.

This initiative is led by Hon. Deborah Kaplan, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for New York City Courts and Hon. George Grasso, Administrative Judge for Queens Supreme Court, Criminal Term.



Surrogate's Court, New York County

Commission to Reimagine the Future of New York's Courts

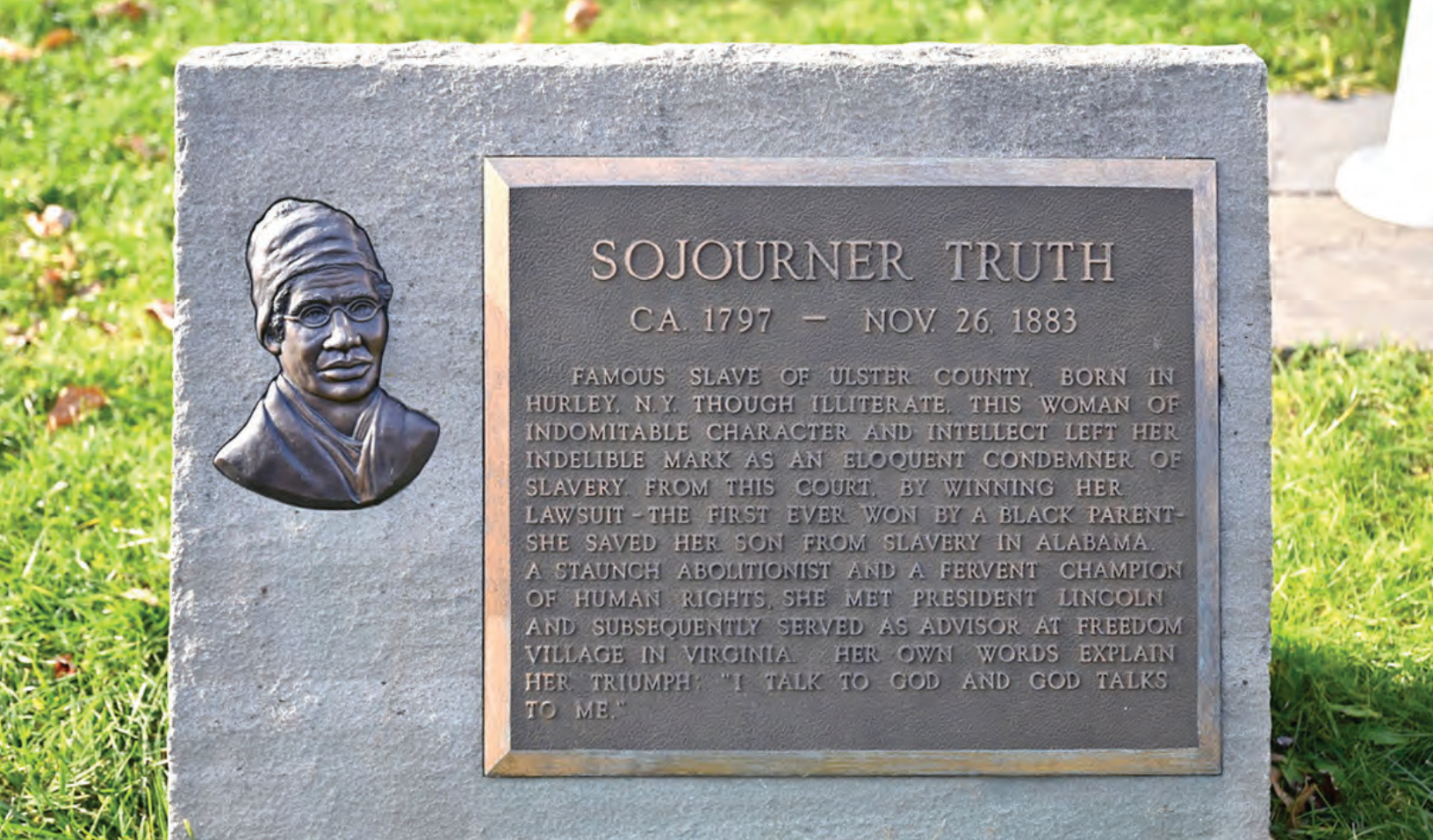
“Under the leadership of Chair Hank Greenberg, the Commission has done an absolutely magnificent job of supporting our court system’s efforts to modernize the delivery of justice, both during the public health crisis, and beyond.”

Chief Judge Janet DiFiore

Chief Judge DiFiore created the Commission to Reimagine the Future of New York’s Courts in June 2020 to examine the enhanced use of technology and online platforms, among other innovations, and make recommendations to improve the delivery and quality of justice services, facilitate access to justice and better equip the New York State court system to keep pace with society’s rapidly evolving changes. The Commission, chaired by former New York State Bar Association President Henry M. Greenberg of Greenberg Traurig, is comprised of six working groups: trials, appellate practice, online courts, regulatory innovations, structural innovations and technology.

In 2021, the Commission and its working groups:

- Issued recommendations for expanding the use of e-filing and proposals for enhancing remote court operations amid the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond.
- Offered a series of guiding principles for the courts to follow in evaluating the potential impact of emerging technologies and trial practice, with a focus on equal access to justice, efficiency, reliability, ease of use and financial cost.
- Issued a report that draws on the experiences of courts and legal practitioners across the country. It contains an overview of the law governing the New York State Courts’ ability to hold remote evidentiary hearings; a “best practices” checklist for conducting remote evidentiary hearings; and safety and other recommendations to consider when holding in-person evidentiary hearings or “hybrid” proceedings during the pandemic.
- Issued a report on improving the efficiency and quality of appellate justice services, drawing on the lessons learned from the successful transition of the four Departments of the Appellate Division to a virtual model early on in the pandemic. The report’s principal recommendation is the creation of a comprehensive, integrated e-filing system, extending from the inception of a case to the appellate process, that would allow lawyers and litigants to retrieve previously filed documents in order to seamlessly compile the record on appeal.



Left to right: Hon. Gerald Connolly, Administrative Judge, Third Judicial District; Hon. Norman St. George, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Courts Outside New York City and Paul O'Neill, Commissioner of Jurors, Ulster County. The exhibit entitled "Sojourner Truth, Abolitionist and Women's Rights Activist" was presented at the Ulster County Surrogate's Court in Kingston. Sojourner Truth, a renowned African American abolitionist and women's rights activist who was born into slavery in New York State, successfully sued in Ulster County to recover her son, who had been sold to a slaveowner in Alabama.

Family and Society

Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children

The New York State Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children was established in 1988 to improve the lives and life chances of children involved with the New York courts. The Commission is chaired by the Hon. Karen K. Peters, former Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, Third Department, and comprised of judges, lawyers, advocates, physicians, educators and state and local officials.

At its inception, the Commission primarily concentrated its efforts on the youngest children before the courts—securing early intervention, establishing a statewide system of Children’s Centers in the Courts, improving court proceedings, promoting the healthy development of children in foster care and focusing on the needs of infants involved in child welfare proceedings.

Over the past three decades, the Commission’s role has expanded to include the needs of older children in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, as well as implementing the New York State Court Improvement Project, a federally funded project to assess and improve foster care, termination of parental rights and adoption proceedings.

The challenge of the pandemic required that the court system move to a virtual court model that required judges, attorneys and litigants to utilize technology platforms that were in many cases unfamiliar. The Commission saw an immediate need and reached out to our partners and the Redlich Horwitz Foundation. Redlich Horwitz assisted the Commission with a generous grant to support family-centered practices, including the provision of remote training to attorneys-for-children, parents and child welfare agencies on how best to use technology platforms to communicate with their clients and participate in hearings.

In 2021, the Commission, in collaboration with the Office for Justice Initiatives and the Child Welfare Court Improvement Program, continued to produce high quality virtual programming to assist parents, attorneys, youth and child welfare organizations navigate the landscape of remote court proceedings in Family Court. The Commission’s programming highlighted diversity, equity and inclusion in child welfare and juvenile justice matters and spotlighted the needs of older and special needs youth involved with the courts.

Also in 2021, the Commission was awarded funds from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention under the Reducing Risk for Girls in the Juvenile Justice System grant. Our work under this grant will seek to create, refine and disseminate evidence-based, gender-responsive, anti-bias training to juvenile justice system staff and leadership across New York State.

Children’s Centers

Recognizing that parents who need access to New York’s courts are often unable to secure appropriate childcare, the court system developed the nation’s first statewide system of cheerful, welcoming Children’s Centers in the courts. The Centers provide a safe, literacy-rich environment and an opportunity for positive interventions in the lives of vulnerable children. During the pandemic, the operation of the Children’s Centers was paused.



The “Honorable Betty Weinberg Ellerin Children’s Center” at 111 Centre Street, Manhattan, is named in honor of the trailblazing judge who worked to improve the treatment of women and children in our courts.

Left to right: Hon. Lawrence K. Marks, Chief Administrative Judge; Hon. Ellen Biben, Administrative Judge, New York County Criminal; Judge Ellerin; Hon. Deborah Kaplan, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for New York City Courts and Cyrus Vance Jr., New York County District Attorney.

The Children’s Center at 111 Centre Street in lower Manhattan is currently under renovation, with funding provided by the Criminal Justice Investment Initiative created by New York County District Attorney Cyrus Vance, Jr. On October 26, 2021, the Center was named in honor of retired Justice Betty Weinberg Ellerin, who dedicated her career to advancing and protecting the interests of children and women. In her seven-decade career, Justice Ellerin has achieved many historic firsts, including serving as the first woman Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, First Department.

Child Welfare Court Improvement Project

The Child Welfare Court Improvement Project (CWCIP) is a federally funded initiative that supports the Family Court’s mandate to promote the safety, permanence and well-being of abused and neglected children. In recognition of the integral role courts play in charting the course for children who are the subject of abuse, neglect, foster care, termination of parental rights and adoption proceedings, the project provides resources and technical assistance to promote continuous quality improvement at the intersection of the legal/judicial and child welfare systems. The Office of Justice Initiatives is

leading the statewide expansion of CWCIP to be more firmly rooted into the structure of the court system and integrated into the Chief Judge's Excellence Initiative.

For the first time, in 2021 the courts engaged parents and youth with child welfare system experience, as well as child and parent advocates, to identify strategies to increase awareness of the importance of family preservation. As a result, two strategies were implemented. The first was a statement by Chief Judge DiFiore, highlighting the importance of family preservation and the courts' commitment to develop plans for celebrating National Family Reunification Month in 2022 and beyond. The second strategy included a panel interview conducted by the Hon. Edwina G. Mendelson, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives, with parents, youth and advocates.

Over 30 virtual training programs were provided on topics including quality legal representation; race equity and disproportionality in the child welfare system; well-being and trauma informed care practices and implementation of new legislation.

Child Welfare Permanency Mediation

Permanency mediation is a consensual dispute resolution process for Family Court Article 10 cases in which a specially trained mediator helps parties to identify issues, clarify perceptions and explore options for a mutually acceptable outcome. Child permanency mediation program roster mediators are experienced mediators trained in advanced family mediation techniques, child welfare laws and regulations, domestic violence issues, large group facilitation techniques, trauma-informed care and cultural humility/implicit bias. The Child Welfare Permanency Mediation program is offered through the CWCIP and has expanded to a statewide virtual program providing the opportunity for permanency mediation anywhere in the state through a statewide roster of mediators.

Reducing Time to Permanency

Due to the Covid-19 backlog in finalizations, CWCIP convened a multi-disciplinary group of stakeholders with representatives from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, New York City Family Court and the New York City Administration for Children's Services' Division of Family Permanency Services and Family Court Legal Services division. The goal of the group was to devise a project supported by CWCIP that would reduce time to permanency on cases currently filed before the court and pending a finalization date by conducting case reviews and analyzing data.

In partnership with OCFS Native American Services, roundtables were conducted in Western, Central and Northern New York to build relationships and form collaboratives between local tribal nations and local family courts.

Child Fatality Advisory Council

The statewide Advisory Council on Child Fatalities supports a first-of-its-kind initiative aimed at preventing child fatalities caused by child abuse, neglect or maltreatment through comprehensive, retrospective examination of court cases. Comprised of judges, lawyers, medical and child welfare professionals, the Advisory Council is developing protocols to guide court-based child fatality reviews according to the principles of safety science and with cultural, ethnic, and racial sensitivity in order to recommend systemic court improvements that will better ensure the safety of vulnerable children.

Problem-Solving Courts and Initiatives

“The judges and court professionals who serve in our 300-plus problem-solving drug treatment, mental health and veterans’ treatment courts are truly dedicated and remarkable people... Our judges and staff know that our treatment courts are making a difference, and they are committed to expanding these life-changing services.”

Chief Judge DiFiore

There are over 300 Problem-Solving Courts throughout New York State, including opioid courts, adult and juvenile drug treatment courts, family treatment courts, veterans’ treatment courts, mental health courts, human trafficking intervention courts, domestic violence courts, integrated domestic violence courts and impaired driving courts.

Each model has the advantage of specially trained judges and staff, dedicated dockets, intensive judicial monitoring and coordination with outside services and agencies. Each also requires ongoing operational and programmatic assistance. The Office for Justice Initiatives’ Division of Policy and Planning oversees and supports problem-solving courts statewide by ensuring their adherence to best practices, promoting evidence-based standards and offering continuing training and education.

For more information on Problem Solving Courts, visit: <https://ww2.nycourts.gov/admin/opp/index.shtml>

Emerging Adults Court

“This innovative court will promote the public safety, holding young adult offenders to a high level of accountability, at the same time providing a range of critical, age-appropriate services to enable participants to avert a criminal record and turn their lives around.”

Judge Kathie E. Davidson

New York State was the second-to-last state in the nation to increase the age of criminal responsibility to at least 18 when a new law became fully effective on Oct. 1, 2019. The Raise the Age (RTA) legislation required fundamental

restructuring of New York State’s juvenile and criminal justice systems. The RTA law has had far-reaching operational impact on our courts.

In June, then-Ninth Judicial District Administrative Judge Kathie E. Davidson joined local officials at Mount Vernon’s City Hall Plaza to announce the launch of a specialized Part in Mount Vernon City Court tailored to eligible offenders between the ages of 18 and 25. The Mount Vernon Emerging Adult Court offers meaningful alternatives to conventional prosecution, sentencing and incarceration for young adults charged with misdemeanors, violations and certain nonviolent felonies.



Left to right: Hon. Lyndon Williams, Mount Vernon City Court Judge; Joanne Dunn, Executive Director, Youth Shelter Program of Westchester Inc.; Hon. Nichelle Johnson, Mount Vernon City Judge; Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard; Westchester County District Attorney Miriam E. Rocah; Hon. Kathie E. Davidson, Ninth Judicial District Administrative Judge; Tamika Coverdale, Attorney; and Hon. Sam Walker, Supreme Court Westchester County.

Youth of color make up a disproportionate number of the young adult offender population, with many having a history of poverty, substance abuse and trauma. The new court, a partnership between the Ninth Judicial District, the Westchester County District Attorney's Office and local defense bar, aims to reduce criminal conviction and incarceration by linking young adult offenders to age-appropriate interventions and services, including counseling, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, educational services and job training.

Family Treatment Courts

The court system operates 18 Family Treatment Courts, including the Schenectady Family Treatment Court, launched in July 2021. A grant of \$1.75 million from the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention will help the court system bring Family Treatment Court best practices to a wider audience, especially in rural counties.

Drug Treatment Courts

New York State leads the nation in the expansion and institutionalization of drug courts into daily court operations. Each drug court in New York is locally based and reflects the legal culture of the community. Support for the program comes from the local communities, the court system budget and the federal government. The Office of Justice Initiatives' Division of Policy and Planning provides regular training, evaluation, assistance and oversight.

In December, the Office for Justice Initiatives was awarded a \$1,650,000 grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance to reduce racial and ethnic disparities and expand the capacity of adult drug treatment courts to serve participants equitably, thus bringing diversion access to scale across New York.

Domestic Violence and Integrated Domestic Violence Courts

The court system operates 38 Domestic Violence (DV) Courts and 43 Integrated Domestic Violence (IDV) Courts.

In November 2020, the Legislature passed comprehensive amendments to the Safe Homes and Family Act, which has required the court system to modify procedures relating to firearms. A best practices and protocols guide was created in 2021, as were many of the forms now required by the mandates in this legislation.

In 2021, four jurisdictions were awarded federal Office on Violence Against Women grants to expand services: Rockland County Family Court; Bronx IDV Court; Albany County DV/IDV Court; and Onondaga IDV Court/Syracuse City DV Court.



Left to right: Hon. Matthew J. Costa, Hon. Eileen Songer McCarthy, Hon. Edwina G. Mendelson, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives and Hon. Jared R. Rice are joined by recent graduates of the Opportunity Youth Program in New Rochelle City Court.

“Elder abuse is a serious public health issue in the United States, with one in 10 individuals over the age of 60 having suffered some form of verbal, physical or sexual abuse or financial exploitation, and studies showing that elder abuse is significantly under-reported.”

Chief Judge DiFiore

Elder Abuse Prevention

In May, the court system released the Elder Justice Resource Guide, a user-friendly tool designed to assist judges, court personnel and others in addressing the range of issues connected to elder abuse and neglect. The Resource Guide was developed jointly by the Office for Justice Initiatives’ Division of Policy and Planning and the Weinberg Center for Elder Justice, which works to foster justice and dignity for older adults. The Weinberg Center also provided funding to produce the guide.

Elder abuse, which can take the form of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect or financial exploitation, happens frequently and impacts older adults of all races, backgrounds and socio-economic groups. Financial abuse is particularly prevalent, with over \$36 billion annually estimated to be taken from older adults nationwide.

The Resource Guide contains a bench book for judges and court personnel, as well as other critical information, in particular, a comprehensive Elder Abuse Resource Directory that includes a list of national, state and local resources and services available in each of New York’s 13 judicial districts. Other topics discussed in the Resource Guide include how to identify elder abuse and neglect, memory and other changes related to the aging process, relevant criminal and civil laws and benefits and entitlements for the special needs of older adults.

For more information and to view or download the Resource Guide, visit: www.elderjustice.nycourts.gov.

Human Trafficking Intervention Courts

The court system operates 12 Human Trafficking Intervention Courts (HTICs) committed to ensuring trauma-informed responses to justice-involved victims of sex trafficking.

By building upon lessons learned in Drug Treatment Courts, Domestic Violence Courts and Mental Health Courts, HTICs incorporate the key principles of problem-solving courts (i.e., specially trained judges, judicial monitoring and linkages to services) to address the unique needs of this vulnerable population. In that regard, the Office for Justice Initiatives’ Division of Policy and Planning works closely with local courts to develop new strategies to identify and improve services for trafficking survivors who enter the criminal and/or family justice systems.

DWI Courts

Driving while under the influence of drugs and alcohol poses serious dangers to drivers, their passengers and members of the public. Despite a reduction in miles traveled, in the past 12-18 months because of Covid-19 lockdowns, the number of traffic fatalities increased 7.2% nationwide.

The New York State Courts continue to dedicate significant resources to support the Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) & Driving While Ability Impaired (DWAI) Parts, which ensure that individuals who drive while impaired are held accountable for their actions.

The court system operates four DWI Treatment Courts and 34 DWI courts that are not treatment focused.

Mental Health Courts

“The [Mental Health Court] will bring a new array of services to a population in dire need, enabling justice-involved individuals with a mental illness to achieve long-term stability and become law-abiding members of the community.”

Hon. Gerald Connolly, Administrative Judge, Third Judicial District

Mental health courts seek to craft a meaningful response to the problems posed by defendants with mental illness in the criminal justice system. Addressing both the treatment needs

of defendants with mental illness and the public safety concerns of communities, these specialized courts link defendants with mental illness to long-term treatment as an alternative to incarceration. The court system operates 36 Mental Health Courts, which include misdemeanor Mental Health Courts in all five boroughs of New York City.

In early 2021, Third Judicial District Administrative Judge Gerald Connolly announced the launch of the Albany Alternative and Treatment Court (AATC), a specialized part in Albany City Court targeting low-level offenders living with a mental illness related to their criminal justice involvement.



Derek Brown with Sierra, a four year old Central Asian Shepherd, used as a therapy dog with the Vets and Drug Court in Newburgh, NY

Opioid Courts

The court system has 27 operational opioid courts, with three more in active planning. The long-term goal is to have an opioid court in every county.

In December, the Office for Justice Initiatives was awarded a \$5.8 million grant to expand efforts to treat and support offenders at high risk of overdose. As part of this grant, the court system will establish the New York Rural Opioid Court Initiative to implement Opioid Courts in eight rural counties. In addition, the court system will establish the Opioid Court Center of Excellence, the first such center in the country, which will serve as a clearinghouse for promising practices and research on the Opioid Intervention Court model. Plans include coordinating justice and treatment efforts through Sequential Intercept Model planning and implementing research-based treatment practices. In 2021, Opioid Courts were opened in Beacon City Court, Auburn City Court and Steuben County Court.

Veterans Treatment Courts

Veterans Treatment Courts (VTC) are a hybrid of mental health courts and drug treatment courts. They were established in recognition of the uniqueness of military culture, with the understanding that some justice-involved veterans develop mental health and substance use issues following military service. These courts work collaboratively with volunteer peer veteran mentors, veteran advocate organizations, community veteran service providers, the US Department of Veterans Affairs and others to ensure that veterans receive help for their unique needs so they can achieve healthy goals and lead productive post-military lives.

Buffalo City Court created the first VTC in 2008. The concept has expanded statewide and there are now 32 Veteran's Treatment Courts in 24 counties.



Mentoring Programs

The New York City Family Court Mentoring Program is a partnership among New York City Family Court, the New York State Mentoring Program, Lawyers for Children and The Legal Aid Society to match teens and young adults in foster care with long term, dedicated mentors. Marsh McClennan and Willkie Farr & Gallagher provide support and mentors for this valuable program.

The United-Community Action Network (U-CAN) court-based mentoring program, created in 2017, began assisting youth charged with misdemeanors in Cohoes City Court and has expanded geographically and programmatically. The cornerstone of U-CAN is the corps of volunteer mentors who commit to helping young, troubled individuals find their strengths and learn accountability and responsibility.

In addition to Cohoes, U-CAN is now active in Schenectady City Court, Syracuse City Court, Albany County Court and Erie County Court. Plans are underway to expand to Binghamton City Court in 2022. U-CAN is active in Family Court with younger individuals, in partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters, in Albany, Schenectady and Warren Counties.

Specialty Courts

Commercial Division

Since its creation in 1995, the Commercial Division of the New York State Supreme Court has transformed business litigation and made the State a preferred forum for complex business disputes. Renowned as one of the world's most efficient venues for the resolution of commercial disputes and located in the world's leading financial center, the Commercial Division is available to businesses of all sizes, both inside and outside the State of New York.

The Commercial Division features judges with commercial law expertise who are familiar with complex contract concepts, securities (including derivatives and other exotic instruments) and business organizations (including numerous international structures), and who have a sophisticated understanding of globalization, international trade and application of laws of foreign jurisdictions, when required. The division embraces advanced courtroom technology for trials, provides for efficient resolution of discovery disputes and offers accelerated adjudication.

Through the work of the Commercial Division Advisory Council—a committee of commercial practitioners, corporate in-house counsel and jurists devoted to the Division's excellence—the Commercial Division has functioned as an incubator, becoming a recognized leader in court

system innovation, and demonstrating an unparalleled creativity and flexibility in development of rules and practices.

In 2021, the Commercial Division adopted new procedural rules proposed by the Advisory Council on remote depositions; virtual evidentiary hearings and non-jury trials on consent; use of neutral evaluation as an ADR mechanism; and disclosure statements by nongovernmental corporate parties relating to ownership of their stock.

The Advisory Council and The Business Council of New York State, Inc. have jointly developed a new one-page flyer that describes the advantages of the Commercial Division. This new flyer seeks to educate businesses about the benefits of choosing the Commercial Division as a forum for business litigation. The flyer covers improvements that have been made to the Commercial Division's rules, procedures and operations to be responsive to the business community's needs, and to make the business litigation process in New York more predictable and efficient.

For more information, visit: <http://ww2.nycourts.gov/courts/comdiv/index.shtml>



Indian Nation Courts

New York State ranks 10th nationally in terms of the size of its indigenous population, with eight different Indian nations residing in and exercising their sovereignty within our borders. Fortunately,

New York's court system has been a national leader in improving the administration of justice for tribal nations and that work has been done through the efforts of the Unified Court System Tribal Courts Committee, co-chaired by Acting Supreme Court Justice Robert Main, Jr., and Supreme Court Justice Mark Montour, as well as through active participation in the New York Federal-State Justice Forum. The forum explores ways in which the different court systems can collaborate, nurture mutual understanding and foster mutual respect. Judges, court personnel, child welfare workers and tribal nation officials address problems of mutual concern, promote efficiency, encourage child support enforcement and common law enforcement goals.

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

In partnership with the Office of Children and Family Services Native American Services, UCS began regional ICWA roundtables to build relationships and address ICWA issues through collaboration with local tribal nations and family courts. The first roundtable was conducted in the western part of the state in June 2020. The first Central New York Roundtable was conducted in October 2021, and the first downstate roundtable will be held in early 2022.

Additionally, UCS has developed a partnership with the St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Court Improvement Program representative and OCFS Bureau of Native American Services to provide support for training and regular convenings to address ICWA systems issues, such as a statewide training series; support for development of a Tribal Family Court; and development of a statewide annual conference.

Town and Village Courts

The Office of Justice Court Support (OJCS) provides legal, educational, financial and operational support to the 1,191 town and village courts in the 57 counties outside New York City. OJCS supports 1,763 justices and about

the same number of court clerks, to ensure that these "courts closest to the people" have remained available to the public during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In 2021, OJCS:

- Provided quality education and training to both judges and clerks by expanding its online presence, including the creation and implementation of 12 new online continuing education programs and the online training of 169 newly elected or appointed town and village justices over a 5-day period in March and again in December 2021.
- Coordinated closely with stakeholder partners, such as the Office of the State Comptroller and the Department of Motor Vehicles, to reduce foot traffic in the town and village courts and thereby reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19 in communities statewide.
- With assistance from the Division of Technology and Court Research, expanded the use of text messages to notify litigants when their case is called.
- Coordinated with the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, various judicial districts and OCA counsel's office on the implementation of Centralized Arraignment Parts (CAP) statewide. These CAP courts ensure counsel at first appearance for defendants arraigned in those parts. Currently, there are 23 CAP courts statewide, with four approved in 2021 alone.
- The Office of Justice Court Support administers the Justice Court Assistance Program. Close to \$3 million was awarded to courts statewide in the 2021-22 funding cycle to assist them in purchasing of resources and equipment necessary to fulfill their critical role in our justice system.

For more information, visit: <https://www.nycourts.gov/courts/townandvillage/>

Training

“Professional training and education are at the heart of our Excellence Initiative, and our efforts to advance the knowledge and skills of our judges and court professionals will redound to the benefit of the entire court system, especially, and most importantly, to the litigants and lawyers who turn to us for fair, efficient and high-quality justice services.”

Chief Judge DiFiore

New York State Judicial Institute

The Judicial Institute (JI), established in 2001, is a year-round center for judicial education, training and research. It is designed to enhance the quality of the New York courts, ensuring that our Judiciary sets the standard for decisional and operational excellence around the country while offering a forum for judicial scholarship that includes continuing education seminars as well as cooperative education programs with other states.

The year 2021 was one of significant change and new beginnings at the JI. In July, following the departure of Interim Dean Sherry Klein Heitler, Chief Judge DiFiore and Chief Administrative Judge Marks appointed Hon. Kathie E. Davidson as the permanent Dean. Judges DiFiore and Marks announced the appointment of the Judicial Institute Advisory Board, to be chaired by the Court of Appeals Judge Michael J. Garcia.

The JI’s 2021 accomplishments include:

- Developing specialized curricula and offering a wide range of Lunch & Learn CLE programs.
- Presenting an in-depth series on principles of evidence.
- Highlighting significant changes in the law, such as the Child-Parent Security Act and the Gender Recognition Act.
- Offering a six-hour CLE program for Court Attorney Referees.
- Utilizing an electronic survey to ascertain the most “of-interest” topics to include in a bankruptcy primer for state court judges.
- Highlighting the importance of wellness for judges and non-judicial staff.

For more information, visit: <https://nycourts.gov/ip/judicialinstitute/index.shtml>



The New York State Judicial Institute marks its 20th anniversary.



“The most common issues in judicial ethics are ... whether a judge may serve in a particular extra-judicial capacity.”

Rosemary Garland-Scott, Special Counsel for Ethics

Judicial Campaign Ethics Center

The Judicial Campaign Ethics Center (JCEC) serves as a central resource on campaign ethics for judicial candidates each year.

In 2021, the JCEC provided campaign ethics training to 182 judicial candidates and received approximately 708 ethics inquiries from judicial

candidates throughout the year. Many of those inquiries were from judicial candidates seeking guidance on ethics rules pertaining to door-to-door petitioning and attending fundraising events, given the state’s guidelines on social distancing due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

For more information, visit: <http://ww2.nycourts.gov/ip/jcec>.



After 42 years on the job, veteran Court Officer Major Gerard Duffy departed New York County Supreme Court for the last time. Judges, Court Officers and court staff were on hand as Major Duffy exited 100 Centre Street, Manhattan.

Safety and Security

“Our New York State Court Officers are skilled, highly trained professionals who are charged with challenging duties and responsibilities. They do an excellent job of serving and protecting our judges and staff and the millions of New Yorkers who enter our court facilities every year.”

Chief Judge Janet DiFiore

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) is responsible for developing uniform guidelines, policies and procedures for ensuring safety throughout the New York State court system. With the paramount goal of protecting judges, court staff and the public, DPS is responsible for emergency preparedness planning and procedures for each court location. The Chief of Public Safety also oversees the management of judicial threats, reviews and assists in the development of security planning for new and existing facilities and is responsible for developing standards and curricula for the Court Officers Academy and for the Court Officers Rules and Procedures Manual.

The court system employs approximately 4,100 highly trained uniformed court officers who are peace officers under New York law, making it one of the largest law enforcement agencies in the nation.

The court system is committed to recruiting a diverse workforce throughout the state. A potential court officer must be at least 20 ½ years of age, a United States citizen, a resident of New York State and a high school graduate or the equivalent. They must have a valid NYS driver’s license and be eligible to purchase and carry firearms.

Court Officer Training Academy

The New York State Court Officers Academy provides training programs for all court system personnel classified as “peace officers.” The Academy, under the command of Chief of Training Joseph Baccellieri, Jr., has a staff of full-time court officers who are all certified as police instructors by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. In addition, adjunct Academy instructors are utilized throughout the State to carry out various training requirements. These highly trained professionals are responsible for carrying out all court system training programs (statewide), many of which are required by statute.



Family and friends of our lost heroes gathered in person and virtually to mark the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center.

9/11 20th Anniversary Memorial Ceremony

Twenty years ago, New York State Court Officers responded to the attacks on the World Trade Center along with thousands of their fellow first responders. Three of these Court Officers—Captain William “Harry” Thompson and Sergeants Thomas Jurgens and Mitchel Wallace—were killed.

To mark the occasion, the Office of Public Affairs conducted and preserved interviews with several Court Officers who responded to the terrorist attacks and remain uniformed members of the Court Officer family. This short tribute presents the haunting memories of Court Officers who were at Ground Zero that day.

For the program, transcript and other materials, visit: <https://ww2.nycourts.gov/admin/publicaffairs/911Ceremony2021.shtml>

Community Affairs Officers

In March, the Department of Public Safety partnered with the New York Police Department’s Community Affairs Bureau, participating in outreach programs with community members and civic organizations to promote awareness of the work of the courts

This collaboration is part of a statewide court officers community affairs program which will include community listening sessions, interaction with schools, clergy and youth organizations and social media outreach.



New York State Court Officers volunteered their time to paint over graffiti to help improve the look of neighborhoods in New York City. They participated as part of the New York City Police Department’s “Let’s Clean Up New York Together” Program.



Court Officer trainee Leslie Zhang adjusts the shield of fellow graduate Deepak Sukhdeo at the New York State Court Officers Academy in Castleton-On-Hudson.



Ulster County Surrogate's Court in Kingston

Access to Information

The Court System is dedicated to facilitating access by the public to court and administrative records in full conformity with State law, and utilizes several different strategies to keep the public informed about court activities and information:

- The court system uses social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube to keep the public up to date on court system news.
- The Office of Public Information provides information about the court system to the media and those who work within the court system.
- The Office of Public Affairs works to promote awareness of the work of the New York State Judiciary among the public, the legal community and court employees.

New York Courts Emergency Alert Portal

In 2021, the court system completed its transition to a vastly superior means of providing the public with timely notice of court closings and delays, the New York Courts Emergency Alert Portal. Through this free service, users can receive prompt alerts as a text, email or phone call—or all three—when a court facility in a county or region of interest is closed or proceedings are delayed.

For many years, the court system used a Twitter account to disseminate emergency alerts, but users were unable to personalize their account and consequently every user received every alert, even if the facility at issue was hundreds of miles away. Now, users only receive alerts for areas of interest to them, and they receive those alerts in a format (text, email or phone call) they choose. More than 20,000 people have signed up so far. Sign up here: <https://www.nycourts.gov/notice/emergency-alerts.shtml>

eTrack

Our free case information service provides information on future appearance dates for cases in Criminal and Family Courts. Individuals may also view information on both active and disposed cases in Civil Supreme and local Civil Courts. By signing up for our eTrack case tracking service, individuals can receive email updates and appearance reminders for Civil Supreme and local civil court cases.

800-Court-NY

As the court system's public information line, 800-Court-NY responds to an average of 100,000 calls each year. From updating the status of weather-related closures of court facilities and other emergency plans, to aiding callers with specific questions, 800-Court-NY typically assists hundreds of callers each day, using a virtual call center and specially trained staff from locations throughout the state. For callers who do not speak English, interpreter assistance is also available.

Landlord-Tenant Eviction Dashboard:

In September, the Court System launched an online Statewide Landlord-Tenant Eviction Dashboard, with eviction filing data from the New York City Civil Court and the City, District, and Town and Village Courts outside New York City. It was developed in response to the high interest in eviction filing data from advocacy groups, the media and others spurred by Covid-19 and the ensuing moratoriums on eviction filings. The dashboard is available at <https://ww2.nycourts.gov/lt-evictions-33576>.



Otsego County Courthouse

Grants and Contracts

The Office of Grants and Contracts is responsible for managing external funding awarded to the court system and for managing the court system's funding of a broad array of human services.

The Contracts Unit is responsible for the fiscal management and stewardship of approximately 230 service contracts with legal aid and human service organizations, including the Center for Court Innovation, Judicial Civil Legal Services providers, Attorney for the Child programs, Community Dispute Resolution Centers, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) programs and substance abuse, mental health and domestic violence services funded by grants.

During 2021, new five-year contracts were awarded to Judiciary Civil Legal Service and Community Dispute Resolution providers. After the enactment of the State's 2022 budget, the unit processed restoration funding to reverse temporary, emergency reductions implemented in the prior year in response to the pandemic. Throughout the year, budget amendments were considered with maximum flexibility to allow organizations to adapt to the changing environment, pivoting to virtual court operations and then back to in-person operations as conditions allowed.

The Grants Unit submitted 16 federal grants during 2021 and was awarded 13. Proposals were developed in collaboration with the Office for Justice Initiatives, the Division of Technology and Court Research, the Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children, the ADR Office and trial courts throughout the state. Grant funding will enhance treatment courts, improve access to justice, develop new responses to domestic violence and address racial inequalities in the justice system.

A few highlights:

- The U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, awarded nearly \$5.8 million under the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program to support the implementation of an Opioid Court Center of Excellence and to support the implementation of up to eight opioid response courts.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, provided supplemental funding to the state's Child Welfare Court Improvement Project to improve the Family Court's capacity to conduct child welfare proceedings virtually and to develop hybrid courtrooms that allow for both virtual and in-person proceedings.
- The National Center for State Courts awarded \$150,000 to support the Judiciary's Equal Justice in the Courts initiative. Funding will be used to implement bias education and training for judges and non-judicial personnel.

Fiscal Overview

The UCS operates on a fiscal year that runs from April 1 through March 31, with funding included in the State Budget and authorized by the State Legislature in accordance with Article VII, Section 1 of the State Constitution. The Judiciary budget request is first approved and certified by the Court of Appeals and is then transmitted to the Governor for incorporation into the State budget and submission to the Legislature. Appropriations of \$3.3 billion were approved by the Legislature for the State Judiciary for the Fiscal year 2022.

The court system collects substantial revenue through fines, fees and other means. In 2021, fines and fees totaled \$723,790,734 a figure which includes all state, county and city remedies, but does not include bail or other trusts.

\$723,790,734

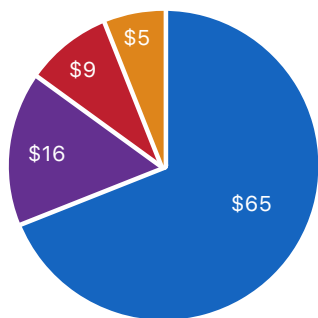
Total Fines and Fees Collected in 2021



\$486,911,226

Criminal Search History Fees Collected in 2021

\$95 Criminal Search History Fee Breakdown



- Indigent Legal Services Fund - \$332,814,250
- Judicial Data Processing Offset Fund - \$82,413,877
- Legal Services Assistance Fund - \$46,081,973
- General Fund - \$25,601,126

Criminal History Search Revenues

A portion of court system-collected revenue includes fees for services provided by UCS' Criminal History Search Unit, which, since 2003, has sold criminal history public records that include felony and misdemeanor convictions from all 62 counties. By law, the Office of Court Administration is solely responsible for the sale of these records produced by a search of its electronic database, charging a legislatively authorized fee of \$95 per name and date of birth searched.

The revenue generated from each search request is allocated as follows:

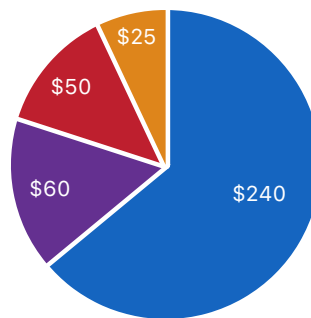
- \$65 to the Indigent Legal Services Fund (Executive Branch Fund)
- \$16 to the Judiciary Data Processing Offset Fund (Judiciary Branch Fund)
- \$9 to the Legal Services Assistance Fund (Executive Branch Fund)
- \$5 to the State's General Fund.

In 2021, the Criminal History Search Unit collected \$486,911,226 for criminal history search records.

\$55,045,400

Attorney Registration Fees Collected in 2021

\$375 Attorney Registration Fee Breakdown



- Attorney Licensing Fund - \$35,236,080
- Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection - \$8,809,645
- Indigent Legal Services - \$7,335,650
- Legal Services Assistance Fund - \$3,664,025

Attorney Registration Revenues

Every attorney admitted to practice law in New York must file a biennial registration form. Attorneys actively practicing law in New York State or elsewhere must, upon registering, pay a \$375 fee, allocated as follows:

- \$60 to the Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection, to support programs providing restitution to clients of dishonest attorneys.
- \$50 to the Indigent Legal Services Fund to cover fees of lawyers serving on 18-b panels representing indigent criminal defendants.
- \$25 to the Legal Services Assistance Fund.
- \$240 to the Attorney Licensing Fund to cover the cost of the Appellate Division attorney admission and disciplinary programs.

In 2021, the UCS collected \$55,045,400 million in attorney registration fees.

Facilities

New York State court facilities are maintained and operated by the cities and counties they serve, an arrangement that requires coordination and cooperation between different agencies and different branches of government.

Since 1987, when the Court Facilities Act was passed to improve court facilities, the Unified Court System has provided financial assistance and guidance to local governments to help them meet their facility-related responsibilities. Over the years, amendments to the Act have enhanced the State's role and increased financial assistance to localities.

In June, then-Ninth Judicial District Administrative Judge Kathie E. Davidson and Westchester County Executive George Latimer unveiled a state-of-the-art Family Court facility in New Rochelle that includes two courtrooms, three hearing rooms, judge's chambers, offices for non-judicial staff as well as for staff from the Office for Women and other county agencies.

Response to the Covid-19 pandemic and its disruption of court operations through the state dominated the efforts of the court system and local governments with regard to the cleaning, maintenance and operation of their court facilities. Notwithstanding these circumstances, many local governments began to refocus their efforts on the capital projects involving the renovation, expansion or replacement of their court facilities:

- **New York City** — The planning and design of a new Civil and Housing Court facility in Brooklyn was completed and the project is set to move into the construction phase in early 2022. Other major capital projects at the 60 Centre Street courthouse and on Staten Island involve key funding and planning agreements between UCS and the NYS Dormitory Authority. In the Bronx, a plan to “swap” Civil Court operations at the County Courthouse at 851 Grand Concourse with the Bronx Housing Court operations at 1118 Grand Concourse has completed design and advanced to the bidding phase.
- **Greene County** — A request for proposals has been issued for an addition to the County's historic courthouse, with the completion of this project expected in March 2024.
- **Steuben County** — Renovations of facilities in Bath have allowed the county to consolidate its once fractured court operations into the County Office Building.
- **Orange County** — The county is nearing completion of its design for a new court facility in Middletown that will convert an empty federal courthouse into a much-needed new City Court facility. The expected schedule will see construction services bid in the spring of 2022, with renovations projected to be completed the spring 2023.
- **Nassau County** — After a pandemic-related delay, the final phase of the combined Nassau County Family/Matrimonial courthouse resumed construction in late spring 2021. This last stage involves the completion of the interior of the building and is scheduled to be completed in July 2023, when it will provide a much needed, state-of-the-art court facility for both Family Court and the Supreme Court matrimonial matters.

Court Structure and Caseload Activity

The Unified Court System is comprised of 11 separate trial courts, an Appellate Division with four regional departments, an Appellate Term that hears appeals from certain trial courts in certain regions of the state, and the Court of Appeals — the highest court in the State.

Appellate Courts

The Court of Appeals is the state's court of last resort. It consists of the Chief Judge and six Associate Judges appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to 14-year terms. The court's caseload activity is reported in TABLE 1.

Table 1: Caseload Activity in Court of Appeals - 2021						
Applications Decided [CPL 460.20(3)(b)]						1,658
Records on Appeal Filed						91
Oral Arguments						58
Appeals Decided						81
Motions Decided						988
Judicial Conduct Determinations Reviewed						0
Dispositions of Appeals Decided in the Court of Appeals by Basis of Jurisdiction						
BASIS OF JURISDICTION	AFFIRMED	REVERSED	MODIFIED	DISMISSED	OTHER*	TOTAL
All Cases						
Dissents in Appellate Division	4	2	0	1	0	7
Permission of Court of Appeals or Judge thereof	25	20	1	0	0	46
Permission of Appellate Division or Justice thereof	7	10	2	0	0	19
Constitutional Question	1	2	0	0	0	3
Stipulation for Judgment Absolute	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	1	0	0	5	6
Total	37	35	3	1	5	81
Civil Cases						
Dissents in Appellate Division	4	2	0	1	0	7
Permission of Court of Appeals	7	9	0	0	0	16
Permission of Appellate Division	0	4	1	0	0	5
Constitutional Question	1	2	0	0	0	3
Stipulation for Judgment Absolute	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	1	0	0	5	6
Total	12	18	1	1	5	37
Criminal Cases						
Permission of Court of Appeals Judge	18	11	1	0	0	30
Permission of Appellate Division Justice	7	6	1	0	0	14
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	25	17	2	0	0	44

*Includes anomalies which did not result in an affirmance, reversal, modification or dismissal (e.g., judicial suspensions, acceptance of a case for review pursuant to Court Rule 500.27)

Below the Court of Appeals is the Appellate Division of State Supreme Court, a mid-level appellate court. The Presiding Justice and Associate Justices of the Appellate Division in each Judicial Department are designated by the Governor from among Justices elected to the Supreme Court. The Presiding Justices serve for the duration of the term for which they were elected to Supreme Court; the Associate Justices may serve terms of five years or of indeterminate length, depending on the seats they are appointed to fill. The Appellate Division's caseload activity is listed in TABLE 2.

Table 2: Caseload Activity in the Appellate Division - 2021									
	FIRST DEPT		SECOND DEPT		THIRD DEPT		FOURTH DEPT		TOTAL
	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	
Records on Appeal Filed	1,630	650	2,655	529	856	306	596	489	7,711
Disposed of before argument or submission (e.g., dismissed, withdrawn, settled)	1,924	135	2,981	322	746	112	0	0	6,220
Disposed of after argument or submission:									
Affirmed	1,018	390	1,192	511	516	236	347	412	4,622
Reversed	296	31	460	62	88	15	104	50	1,106
Modified	263	74	249	75	104	19	122	51	957
Dismissed	189	5	392	6	75	3	130	15	815
Other	14	10	93	67	7	2	4	16	213
Total Dispositions	3,704	645	5,367	1,043	1,536	387	707	544	13,933
	FIRST DEPT		SECOND DEPT		THIRD DEPT		FOURTH DEPT		TOTAL
Oral Arguments*	1,365		1,655		531		727		4,278
Motions Decided*	3,621		5,640		5,589		5,618		20,468
Admissions to the Bar	1,820		2,126		3,571		312		7,829
Atty. Disciplinary Proceedings Decided	36		132		191		35		394

*Not broken down by civil or criminal.

Appellate Terms of the Supreme Court in the First and Second Judicial Departments hear appeals from civil and criminal cases originating in New York City's Civil and Criminal Courts. In the Second Department, the Appellate Terms also hear appeals from civil and criminal cases originating in District, City, and town and village Justice Courts. Justices are selected by the Chief Administrative Judge upon approval of the Presiding Justice of the appropriate Appellate Division. The Appellate Terms' caseload activity is listed in TABLE 3.

Table 3: Caseload Activity in the Appellate Terms - 2021							
	FIRST DEPT			SECOND DEPT			TOTAL
	Civil	Criminal	Total	Civil	Criminal	Total	
Records on Appeal Filed	66	65	131	489	289	778	909
Disposed of before argument or submission (e.g., dismissed, withdrawn, settled)	-	11	11	343	111	454	465
Disposed of after argument or submission:							
Affirmed	57	92	149	157	123	280	429
Reversed	24	13	37	110	42	152	189
Modified	8	3	11	43	8	51	62
Dismissed	9	4	13	30	7	37	50
Other	1	-	1	33	3	36	37
Total Dispositions	99	123	222	716	294	1,010	1,232
Oral Arguments*	122			211			333
Motions Decided*	433			1,380			1,813

*Not broken down by civil or criminal.

Trial Courts

In 2021, 2,160,646 cases were filed statewide in the trial courts. Criminal cases accounted for 30.5%. Civil cases accounted for 46%. Seventeen percent of the cases were in Family Court and 6.5% were in Surrogate's Court. TABLE 4 shows total filings in the trial courts over a five-year period. FIGURE A shows the percentage of filings by case type.

Table 4: Filings in the Trial Courts: Five-Year Comparison*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Criminal					
Supreme and County Courts Criminal ^a	44,283	43,040	39,324	19,059	29,670
Criminal Court of the City of NY ^b	438,525	318,340	325,570	172,451	204,112
City & District Courts Outside NYC ^b	631,255	592,231	606,245	395,448	412,485
Parking Tickets ^c	104,984	93,286	14,331	5,445	17,542
Criminal Total	1,219,047	1,046,897	985,470	592,403	663,809
Civil					
Supreme Court Civil ^d	466,949	460,671	453,140	306,270	345,805
Civil Court of the City of NY ^e	532,043	555,549	540,980	327,371	327,309
City & District Courts Outside NYC ^e	188,550	196,824	191,228	118,024	125,378
County Courts Civil ^d	108,451	93,002	83,278	86,523	96,727
Court of Claims	1,816	1,765	1,801	1,590	1,577
Small Claims Assessment Review Program	44,211	40,466	42,029	102,571	91,426
Civil Total	1,342,020	1,348,277	1,312,456	942,349	988,222
<i>Family^f</i>	611,470	580,548	578,346	325,694	369,186
<i>Surrogate's</i>	141,735	144,325	141,237	118,284	139,429
Total	3,314,272	3,120,047	3,017,509	1,978,730	2,160,646

*This reflects data entry as of 2/28/22.

^aIncludes felonies and misdemeanors, of which 1,845 were misdemeanor filings in 2021.

^bNYC includes arrest and summons cases, and beginning in 2019, includes uniform traffic tickets that require the court's involvement. Outside NYC includes arrest cases and uniform traffic tickets that require the court's involvement.

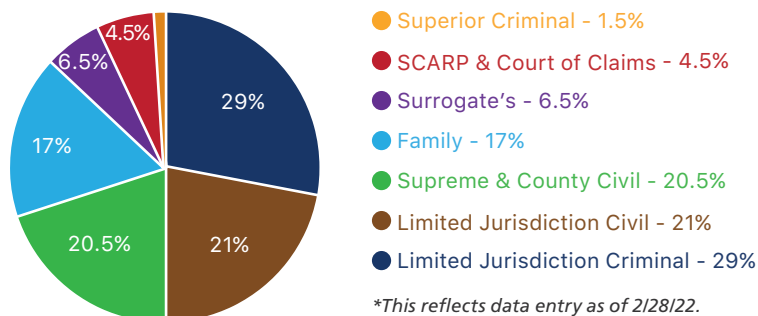
^cBeginning in 2019, parking ticket counts only include those tickets that require the court's involvement. The counts for 2019, and going forward, include both NYC and outside NYC.

^dIncludes new cases, ex parte applications and uncontested matrimonial cases.

^eIncludes civil, housing, small claims and commercial claims.

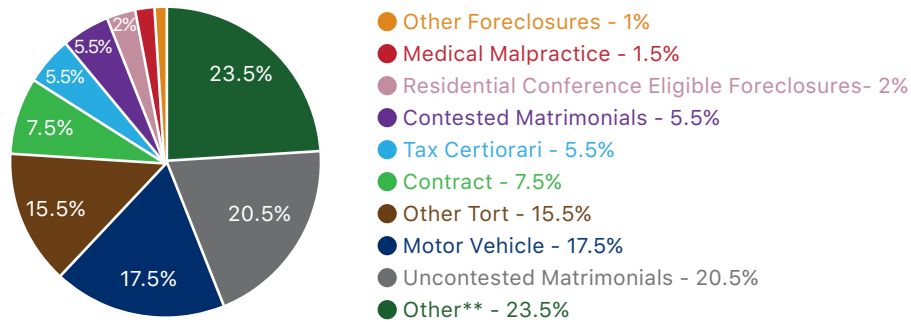
^fIncludes Permanency Planning Hearings held.

Figure A: Trial Court Filings by Case Type - 2021*



The Supreme Court generally handles cases outside the authority of the lower courts such as civil matters beyond the monetary limits of the lower courts' jurisdiction; divorce, separation and annulment proceedings; equity suits, such as mortgage foreclosures and injunctions; and criminal prosecutions of felonies. During 2021, there were 345,805 civil filings in Supreme Court, including 150,537 new cases, 156,192 ex parte applications and 39,076 uncontested matrimonial cases. A total of 324,980 matters reached disposition. The Supreme Court's caseload activity is listed in TABLE 5. FIGURE B shows the percentage of filings by case type and FIGURE C shows the breakdown of cases by manner of disposition.

Figure B: Supreme Civil Filings by Case Type - 2021*



*This reflects data entry as of 2/28/22.

**Other mostly consists of Guardianship, Arbitration, Article 78, Real Property, Mental Hygiene, and Special Proceeding cases.

Table 5: Supreme Civil Cases - 2021*

Location	FILINGS		DISPOSITIONS				
	New Cases	Note of Issue	Total	Pre-Note	Note of Issue	Settlements	Verdicts
TOTAL STATE	150,537	30,140	129,959	105,471	24,488	24,934	867
NYC	75,068	12,968	55,679	45,555	10,124	8,795	467
BRONX	15,063	2,022	10,683	9,184	1,499	3,825	51
KINGS	22,816	4,280	14,810	11,101	3,709	1,054	88
NEW YORK	17,800	2,898	14,625	12,669	1,956	1,808	115
QUEENS	16,674	3,148	12,535	10,265	2,270	1,456	178
RICHMOND	2,715	620	3,026	2,336	690	652	35
ONYC	75,469	17,172	74,280	59,916	14,364	16,139	400
Albany	3,007	408	3,390	2,956	434	354	8
Allegany	115	22	120	92	28	9	0
Broome	1,017	145	942	801	141	8	0
Cattaraugus	238	39	244	237	7	59	0
Cayuga	290	50	294	245	49	3	0
Chautauqua	443	80	638	555	83	61	1
Chemung	314	63	327	263	64	7	0
Chenango	153	46	144	105	39	10	1
Clinton	296	35	310	251	59	61	1
Columbia	304	69	244	194	50	45	1
Cortland	118	41	130	92	38	1	2
Delaware	172	27	253	203	50	8	1
Dutchess	2,199	522	2,210	1,798	412	370	7
Erie	7,268	963	7,015	6,137	878	1,384	28
Essex	152	23	149	124	25	1	0
Franklin	215	29	233	198	35	45	0
Fulton	270	50	363	301	62	112	3
Genesee	208	25	214	193	21	25	0

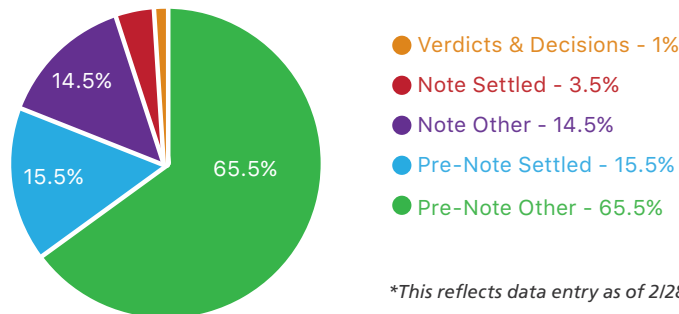
*This reflects data entry as of 2/28/22.

Table 5: Supreme Civil Cases - 2021*

Location	FILINGS		DISPOSITIONS				
	New Cases	Note of Issue	Total	Pre-Note	Note of Issue	Settlements	Verdicts
TOTAL STATE	150,537	30,140	129,959	105,471	24,488	24,934	867
Greene	287	79	228	154	74	49	1
Herkimer	277	69	344	286	58	34	0
Jefferson	455	125	404	292	112	7	0
Lewis	49	20	92	62	30	16	0
Livingston	171	28	164	137	27	11	0
Madison	211	60	129	90	39	4	1
Monroe	3,225	682	2,861	2,260	601	122	4
Montgomery	232	34	269	227	42	127	1
Nassau	15,182	4,098	13,820	10,859	2,961	3,941	124
Niagara	1,018	222	1,255	1,059	196	207	4
Oneida	1,317	366	1,290	918	372	256	20
Onondaga	2,261	716	2,194	1,603	591	44	10
Ontario	496	91	480	412	68	21	0
Orange	2,817	625	2,747	2,285	462	597	9
Orleans	146	8	176	170	6	36	0
Oswego	444	65	300	243	57	35	22
Otsego	216	54	212	161	51	3	1
Putnam	476	117	565	445	120	20	4
Rensselaer	664	121	696	580	116	84	6
Rockland	2,653	717	2,655	2,095	560	738	7
St. Lawrence	482	124	508	401	107	101	0
Saratoga	954	184	932	732	200	342	1
Schenectady	746	174	835	680	155	320	5
Schoharie	111	26	86	65	21	1	0
Schuyler	47	19	34	19	15	0	0
Seneca	238	15	226	211	15	1	0
Steuben	234	75	231	181	50	14	0
Suffolk	12,461	1,956	12,882	10,904	1,978	5,042	83
Sullivan	592	121	497	395	102	22	5
Tioga	144	33	180	146	34	8	0
Tompkins	216	59	192	140	52	10	9
Ulster	1,300	434	1,233	875	358	222	5
Warren	285	68	262	219	43	10	0
Washington	259	53	257	199	58	81	0
Wayne	365	78	403	338	65	29	0
Westchester	7,359	2,788	7,135	5,067	2,068	990	24
Wyoming	242	26	224	214	10	28	1
Yates	58	5	62	47	15	3	0

*This reflects data entry as of 2/28/22.

Figure C: Supreme Civil Disposition by Type of Disposition - 2021*



*This reflects data entry as of 2/28/22.

County Courts, located in each county outside New York City, handle criminal prosecutions of felonies and misdemeanors committed within the county, although in practice most minor offenses are handled by lower courts. County Courts also have limited jurisdiction over civil lawsuits involving claims up to \$25,000. County Courts in the Third and Fourth Departments, while primarily trial courts, also hear appeals from cases originating in the City Courts and town and village Justice Courts. The statistical data for the County Courts' felony caseload are reported in combination with the felony caseload data for Supreme Court in TABLE 6.

Table 6: Supreme Criminal & County Court - Felony Cases 2021*										
Location	FILINGS			DISPOSITIONS						
	Total	Indictments	SCI's**	Total	Guilty Pleas	Convictions	Acquittals	Nonjury Verdicts	Dismissals	Other
Total State	27,825	19,600	8,225	26,865	21,912	314	99	83	2,611	1,846
NYC	11,130	9,731	1,399	10,317	7,369	65	37	13	1,521	1,312
New York	2,477	2,337	140	1,549	1,097	10	8	2	313	119
Bronx	2,920	2,724	196	2,795	1,804	14	15	1	404	557
Kings	3,495	2,892	603	3,813	2,693	24	6	8	583	499
Queens	1,770	1,426	344	1,594	1,298	13	5	2	178	98
Richmond	468	352	116	566	477	4	3	0	43	39
ONYC	16,695	9,869	6,826	16,548	14,543	249	62	70	1,090	534
Albany	506	300	206	450	403	9	1	0	34	3
Allegany	62	14	48	77	65	0	0	0	1	11
Broome	440	228	212	421	380	15	2	1	20	3
Cattaraugus	200	104	96	269	224	3	0	0	38	4
Cayuga	163	95	68	151	146	4	0	0	1	0
Chautauqua	158	96	62	137	117	0	0	0	16	4
Chemung	277	270	7	318	276	6	0	4	31	1
Chenango	118	77	41	115	111	0	1	0	2	1
Clinton	167	64	103	222	197	8	2	0	5	10
Columbia	101	41	60	69	59	3	2	0	0	5
Cortland	127	59	68	138	103	2	0	0	11	22
Delaware	36	15	21	36	32	0	0	0	3	1
Dutchess	263	114	149	260	242	4	3	0	9	2
Erie	1,357	647	710	1,168	1,058	8	1	14	41	46
Essex	76	47	29	87	60	1	0	0	3	23
Franklin	89	51	38	81	77	1	0	0	1	2
Fulton	139	83	56	92	88	2	0	0	1	1
Genesee	193	111	82	185	173	4	1	3	1	3
Greene	113	75	38	117	99	0	0	0	4	14
Hamilton	3	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Herkimer	105	47	58	73	61	5	0	0	1	6
Jefferson	367	178	189	396	372	3	1	2	12	6
Lewis	60	12	48	82	81	0	0	0	1	0
Livingston	138	96	42	161	142	3	4	0	2	10
Madison	164	39	125	183	177	5	0	0	1	0
Monroe	1,302	963	339	1,269	922	29	10	24	249	35

*This reflects data entry as of 2/28/22.

**Superior Court Information

Table 6: Supreme Criminal & County Court - Felony Cases 2021*

Location	FILINGS			DISPOSITIONS						
	Total	Indictments	SCI's**	Total	Guilty Pleas	Convictions	Acquittals	Nonjury Verdicts	Dismissals	Other
Total State	27,825	19,600	8,225	26,865	21,912	314	99	83	2,611	1,846
Montgomery	112	30	82	134	127	0	1	0	5	1
Nassau	1,621	884	737	1,555	1,363	12	2	3	142	33
Niagara	361	186	175	361	316	7	0	0	12	26
Oneida	515	318	197	521	468	12	4	1	18	18
Onondaga	1,039	726	313	969	868	15	6	1	63	16
Ontario	263	135	128	262	228	6	3	0	18	7
Orange	440	272	168	509	469	3	0	1	13	23
Orleans	67	58	9	76	72	0	1	0	2	1
Oswego	152	106	46	165	152	6	0	1	6	0
Otsego	43	36	7	43	42	1	0	0	0	0
Putnam	72	39	33	66	60	2	0	0	2	2
Rensselaer	269	191	78	264	233	4	0	0	21	6
Rockland	268	221	47	324	242	0	1	1	72	8
St. Lawrence	238	162	76	294	254	4	2	0	17	17
Saratoga	269	67	202	297	287	4	1	0	4	1
Schenectady	224	120	104	225	206	5	1	1	6	6
Schoharie	42	42	0	23	22	0	0	0	0	1
Schuyler	51	39	12	63	52	2	0	2	2	5
Seneca	102	34	68	112	104	1	0	0	5	2
Steuben	428	371	57	430	322	6	2	5	28	67
Suffolk	1,519	1,110	409	1,190	1,059	8	1	0	85	37
Sullivan	123	56	67	174	153	5	5	0	5	6
Tioga	69	34	35	73	65	4	0	1	3	0
Tompkins	101	62	39	104	86	3	0	0	9	6
Ulster	179	88	91	265	242	1	1	0	18	3
Warren	119	43	76	129	116	1	0	0	3	9
Washington	118	93	25	107	99	1	0	0	6	1
Wayne	236	191	45	244	221	4	1	2	8	8
Westchester	695	198	497	743	697	13	2	1	23	7
Wyoming	169	88	81	200	190	3	0	0	4	3
Yates	67	42	25	67	61	1	0	2	2	1

*This reflects data entry as of 2/28/22.

**Superior Court Information

The Court of Claims is a statewide court with exclusive authority over lawsuits involving monetary claims against the State of New York or certain other state-related entities such as the New York State Thruway, the City University of New York and the New York State Power Authority (claims for the appropriation of real property only). The Court hears cases at nine locations around the state. During 2021, 1,577 claims were filed and 1,341 were decided.

The Surrogate's Court, located in every county of the state, hears cases involving the affairs of the deceased, including the validity of wills and the administration of estates. These courts are also authorized to handle adoption and guardianships. See TABLE 7 for 2021 filings and dispositions by case type.

Table 7: Surrogate's Court Filings & Dispositions: Proceedings by Case Type - 2021

Case Type	TOTAL STATE		NYC		OUTSIDE NYC	
	Filings	Dispositions*	Filings	Dispositions*	Filings	Dispositions*
Total	139,429	113,067	35,747	31,246	103,682	81,821
Probate	42,417	43,036	11,402	10,058	31,015	32,978
Administration	20,696	20,899	9,016	7,783	11,680	13,116
Voluntary Admin.	28,640	28,640	7,571	7,571	21,069	21,069
Accounting	24,365	4,077	2,536	1,405	21,829	2,672
Inter Vivos Trust	1,344	1,075	132	151	1,212	924
Miscellaneous	6,839	6,690	2,307	2,638	4,532	4,052
Guardianship	14,359	7,219	2,671	1,478	11,688	5,741
Adoption	759	1,420	111	161	648	1,259
Estate Tax	10	11	1	1	9	10

*Includes orders and decrees signed.

The Family Court, located in each county outside New York City and citywide in the City, hears matters involving children and families, including adoption, guardianship, foster care approval and review, juvenile delinquency, family violence, child abuse and neglect, custody and visitation, and child support. See TABLE 8 for a breakdown of Family Court filings and dispositions. This table also contains filings and dispositions for the State's Integrated Domestic Violence (IDV) Courts.

Table 8: Family & Supreme Court (IDV) Filings & Dispositions by Type of Petition - 2021*

Type of Petition	TOTAL STATE		NYC		OUTSIDE NYC	
	Filings	Dispositions	Filings	Dispositions	Filings	Dispositions
Total	369,186	389,292	83,868	98,791	285,318	290,501
Termination of Parental Rights	2,990	2,798	539	514	2,451	2,284
Surrender of Child	1,586	1,584	261	244	1,325	1,340
Child Protective (Neglect & Abuse)	30,171	32,839	9,171	11,787	21,000	21,052
Juvenile Delinquency	7,171	7,045	2,248	2,208	4,923	4,837
Designated Felony	418	257	266	124	152	133
Persons in Need of Supervision	683	772	46	107	637	665
Adoption	1,970	2,055	533	639	1,437	1,416
Adoption Certification	139	180	53	64	86	116
Guardianship	9,025	8,730	2,817	2,606	6,208	6,124
Custody/Visitation	123,800	126,734	22,629	23,641	101,171	103,093
Foster Care Review	116	68	59	22	57	46
Foster Care Placement	317	244	136	80	181	164
Family Offense	52,238	53,619	15,841	17,811	36,397	35,808
Paternity	10,121	12,632	1,776	3,344	8,345	9,288
Support	95,131	105,560	13,772	21,223	81,359	84,337
Uniform Interstate Family Support Act	3,202	3,867	902	1,571	2,300	2,296
Consent to Marry	11	14	4	4	7	10
Other	412	609	72	59	340	550
Permanency Planning Hearings Held	29,685	29,685	12,743	12,743	16,942	16,942

*This reflects data entry as of 2/26/22.

The Civil Court of the City of New York has jurisdiction over civil cases involving amounts up to \$25,000. It includes small claims and commercial claims parts for the informal resolution of matters involving amounts up to \$5,000, and a housing part presided over by judges designated by the Chief Administrator for landlord-tenant proceedings. New York City Civil Court Judges are elected to 10-year terms; housing judges are appointed to five-year terms. TABLE 9 shows the breakdown of filings and dispositions by case type and county.

Table 9: New York City Civil Court: Filings & Dispositions by Case Type - 2021*								
	CIVIL ACTIONS		HOUSING		SMALL CLAIMS		COMMERCIAL CLAIMS	
	Filing ^a	Dispositions ^b	Filing ^a	Dispositions ^b	Filing	Dispositions	Filing	Dispositions
New York City	261,622	123,311	54,509	49,399	9,602	3,120	1,576	475
New York	37,253	14,332	10,436	10,987	1,530	279	155	32
Bronx	47,927	20,093	17,598	14,012	1,507	341	196	21
Kings	97,117	32,179	14,284	14,837	3,313	1,926	499	276
Queens	62,638	37,570	10,991	8,237	2,698	376	473	57
Richmond	16,687	19,137	1,200	1,326	554	198	253	89

*This reflects data entry as of 2/28/22.

^a Includes both answered and unanswered cases.

^b Includes courtroom dispositions and default judgments.

The Criminal Court of the City of New York handles misdemeanors and violations. New York City Criminal Court Judges also conduct felony arraignments and other preliminary (pre-indictment) felony proceedings. They are appointed by the Mayor to 10-year terms. During 2021, 73 % of the arrests were misdemeanors, with 19% of all cases reaching disposition by plea. Another 71 % were dismissed; 6 % were sent to the grand jury; 3 % were disposed of by other means; and 1 % pled to a superior court information. TABLE 10 shows filings and dispositions by county for arrest cases, summons cases (cases in which an appearance ticket, returnable in court, is issued to the defendant), uniform traffic tickets, and parking tickets that require the court's involvement.

Table 10: New York City Criminal Court: Filings & Dispositions - 2021*								
	ARREST CASES		SUMMONS CASES		TRAFFIC TICKETS		PARKING TICKETS	
	Filings	Dispositions	Filings*	Dispositions	Filings	Dispositions	Filings	Dispositions
New York City	118,583	144,961	49,802	78,431	35,727	36,387	502	490
New York	31,229	36,696	8,425	15,400	2,648	3,167	0	0
Bronx	20,903	27,879	10,504	18,453	2,458	3,018	1	1
Kings	32,764	39,586	20,576	24,321	16,612	16,119	259	254
Queens	27,490	33,827	8,769	17,421	11,215	11,492	236	231
Richmond	6,197	6,973	1,528	2,836	2,794	2,591	6	4

*This reflects data entry as of 2/28/22.

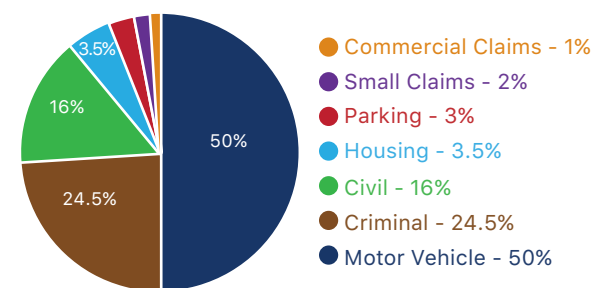
**Includes both answered and unanswered cases.

City Courts Outside New York City arraign felonies and handle misdemeanor and lesser offenses, as well as civil lawsuits involving claims up to \$15,000. City Courts also have small claims parts for the informal disposition of matters involving claims up to \$5,000 and/or housing parts to handle landlord-tenant matters and housing violations.

District Courts, located in Nassau County and the five western towns of Suffolk County, arraign felonies and handle misdemeanors and lesser offenses as well as civil lawsuits involving claims up to \$15,000.

In 2021, there were a total of 554,903 filings and 544,618 dispositions in the City and District Courts FIGURE D shows filings by case type; TABLE 11 contains a breakdown of filings by location and case type.

Figure D: City & District Filings by Case Type - 2021*



*This reflects data entry as of 2/28/22.

Table 11: City and District Courts: Filings by Case Type - 2021*

Total Filings: 554,903

Location	Criminal	MV	Parking	Civil	Small Claims	L&T	Commercial
Total	136,732	275,753	17,040	90,132	12,284	18,937	4,025
Albany	3,022	18,189	123	2,092	406	721	124
Amsterdam	845	2,372	67	384	84	158	18
Auburn	1,147	1,878	286	698	110	201	21
Batavia	823	1,445	33	231	79	49	37
Beacon	199	612	81	213	43	48	17
Binghamton	2,457	3,716	11	844	259	384	64
Buffalo	7,879	5,804	41	5,450	1,016	1,731	351
Canandaigua	306	3,096	27	294	64	44	9
Cohoes	845	1,987	20	225	43	160	4
Corning	474	837	7	543	49	21	1
Cortland	884	1,677	3	273	60	97	47
Dunkirk	568	1,144	1	163	46	50	11
Elmira	1,559	1,552	7	684	112	205	22
Fulton	797	1,943	0	183	56	48	46
Geneva	347	910	6	185	27	70	3
Glen Cove	253	1,527	1,300	8	47	72	41
Glens Falls	743	1,704	46	468	79	69	14
Gloversville	696	858	5	437	50	166	24
Hornell	517	1,082	1	145	30	37	5
Hudson	426	831	3	175	43	11	52
Ithaca	926	942	10	191	97	39	8
Jamestown	2,743	2,465	422	472	99	145	17
Johnstown	289	681	3	152	23	37	11
Kingston	1,199	2,629	9	519	135	101	21
Lackawanna	791	4,532	52	315	143	79	64
Little Falls	150	364	0	130	80	10	25
Lockport	698	1,050	48	661	187	98	65

*This reflects data entry as of 2/28/22.

Table 11: City and District Courts: Filings by Case Type - 2021*							Total Filings: 554,903
Location	Criminal	MV	Parking	Civil	Small Claims	L&T	Commercial
Total	136,732	275,753	17,040	90,132	12,284	18,937	4,025
Long Beach	2,437	2,807	3,971	13	62	95	5
Mechanicville	364	1,153	1	188	49	16	47
Middletown	1,947	5,289	432	1,006	156	70	53
Mount Vernon	1,910	3,353	21	332	157	584	22
New Rochelle	1,585	8,139	59	561	160	348	40
Newburgh	1,873	4,196	42	598	150	219	24
Niagara Falls	2,658	5,910	6,503	1,000	144	454	20
North Tonawanda	962	7,505	7	305	71	74	31
Norwich	526	504	4	207	32	43	28
Ogdensburg	566	667	0	263	72	31	62
Olean	723	1,012	4	182	67	23	7
Oneida	836	1,671	15	655	46	56	13
Oneonta	432	584	4	165	48	26	11
Oswego	1,369	2,805	300	321	100	45	11
Peekskill	880	2,707	10	177	80	100	11
Plattsburgh	737	1,249	14	254	81	78	37
Port Jervis	691	1,840	8	151	33	46	5
Poughkeepsie	803	1,511	1,439	698	201	346	28
Rensselaer	229	690	5	270	36	58	24
Rochester	6,104	3,891	42	2,025	1,061	1,917	250
Rome	1,782	6,209	53	772	109	199	10
Rye	245	4,342	19	26	58	19	16
Salamanca	626	1,004	4	96	29	4	5
Saratoga Springs	1,101	3,702	355	336	154	111	44
Schenectady	2,531	7,515	88	957	264	578	44
Sherrill	40	95	0	62	14	2	0
Syracuse	7,702	11,279	10	2,298	505	671	62
Tonawanda	500	2,630	22	429	102	34	52
Troy	1,411	2,735	17	907	123	411	29
Utica	3,096	6,106	3	1,235	256	471	71
Watertown	1,383	2,608	3	532	112	192	38
Watervliet	516	3,691	3	233	38	84	4
White Plains	1,757	7,968	602	239	221	146	75
Yonkers	4,007	12,289	98	1,129	307	1,626	147
Nassau District	16,950	34,167	184	17,800	1,703	1,924	962
Suffolk District	33,870	46,103	86	37,575	2,016	2,985	615

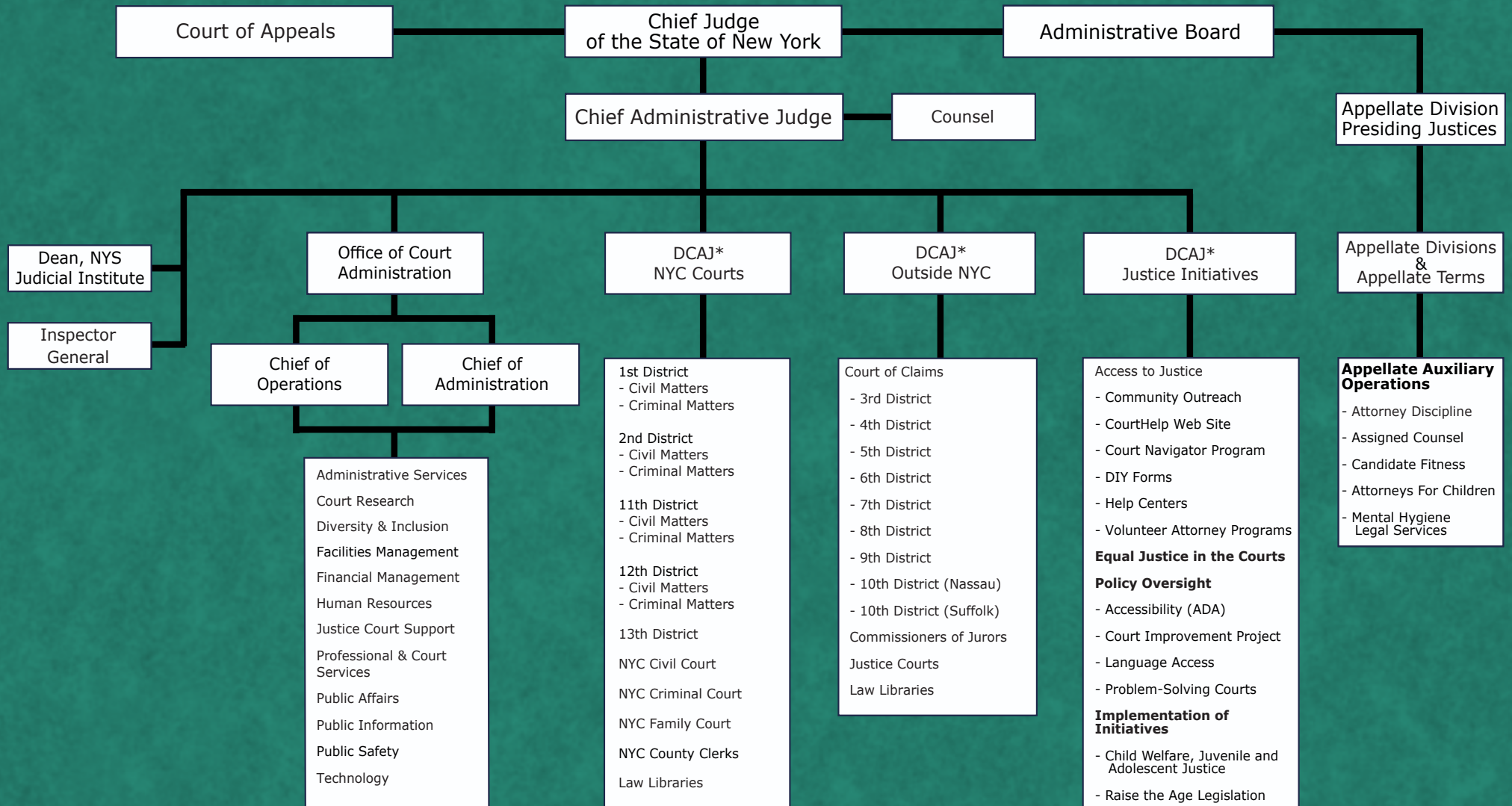
*This reflects data entry as of 2/28/22.

Town and Village Justice Courts handle misdemeanors and lesser offenses as well as civil lawsuits involving claims up to \$3,000 (including small claims cases). While most of cases handled by these courts are minor traffic offenses, drunk-driving cases and zoning violations, town and village Justices also arraign felonies and handle misdemeanors. There are 1,191 Justice Courts and 1,763 Town and Village Justices.



NEW YORK STATE Unified Court System

Administrative Structure



*DCAJ - Deputy Chief Administrative Judge

Office of Court Administration

The New York State Unified Court System is administered by the Office of Court Administration (OCA) under the authority of the Chief Judge and Chief Administrative Judge. OCA provides financial management, technology, public safety, personnel management and other essential services to support day-to-day court operations. OCA is comprised of the following divisions:

- **Division of Financial Management** prepares the Judiciary budget and formulates and implements fiscal policies.
- **Counsel's Office**, the law department for OCA, represents or coordinates legal representation of the court system, prepares the legislative program, drafts administrative and procedural rules for court operations, negotiates contracts, and advises judges and nonjudicial employees on ethical obligations.
- **Inspector General's Office** is responsible for the investigation and elimination of infractions of discipline standards, conflicts of interest and criminal activities on the part of non-judicial employees and individuals or corporations doing business with the courts. It also investigates allegations of work-related bias, enforces rules concerning fiduciary appointments and conducts financial and operational audits.
- **Division of Professional and Court Services** provides support and guidance to trial court operations, including alternative dispute resolution, continuing legal education, language access, grants and contracts, records management, legal information and production of the court record. It also provides professional support for American with Disabilities Act initiatives, educational and awareness programs and the guardianship assistance network.
- **The Division of Human Resources** is charged with providing support services to the court system for personnel administration; benefits administration; labor relations; peace officer training; career services and professional development and equal employment opportunity policies. Human Resources professionals provide outreach and consultation to judges, court administrators, court personnel, union representatives and members of the public. The Division's activities are primarily designed to support the court system's workforce in all aspects of employment.
- **Division of Technology and Court Research** provides hardware, software, programming, Internet connectivity, cybersecurity, database, help desk, technical education, phone, networking, data, analysis, caseload management and other reports, performance measures and data tools for the New York State Unified Court System.
- **Office of Public Information** coordinates communications and serves as liaison with the media.
- **Office of Public Affairs** promotes awareness of the work of the court system among the public, the legal community and court employees.
- **Department of Public Safety** responsible for developing and implementing uniform policies and procedures to ensure the safety and accessibility of state courthouses.
- **Office of Court Facilities Planning** provides oversight and guidance to local governments in relation to the construction, renovation and maintenance of state court facilities.
- **Division of Policy and Planning** develops best practice standards for the courts, reviews ways to streamline court operations and improve case processing and designs legal and operational seminars for court employees.
- **Office of Diversity and Inclusion** promotes and supports diversity in hiring and promotion in the court system's workforce and promotes practices that ensure a bias-free workplace.
- **Office of Justice Court Support** provides legal, educational, financial, and operational support to 1,191 town and village courts in the 57 counties outside New York City.



Veterans Court, Westchester County Courthouse, White Plains

Measures Enacted into Law in 2021

The Office of Counsel is the principal representative of the Unified Court System in the legislative process. In this role, it is responsible for developing the Judiciary's legislative program and for providing the legislative and executive branches with analyses and recommendations concerning legislative measures that may have an impact on the courts and their administrative operations. It also serves a liaison function with bar association committees, judicial associations, and other groups, public and private, with respect to changes in court-related statutory law and staffs the Chief Administrative Judge's advisory committees on Civil Practice, Criminal Law and Procedure, Family Law, Estates and Trusts, Matrimonial Practice and the Local Courts.

During the 2021 legislative session, Counsel's Office, with the assistance of the Chief Administrative Judge's advisory committees, prepared and submitted 65 new measures for legislative consideration. Ultimately, seven were enacted into law, including the Judiciary Budget bill. While this legislative success rate was somewhat less than that usually enjoyed by the Judiciary, it is apparent that the Judiciary's agenda, along with the agendas of so many others who annually petition the Legislature for changes in State law, was a casualty of an abbreviated legislative session that gave most of its attention to coping with the Covid-19 pandemic.

The following is a summary of major action taken in 2021 on measures in the Judiciary's legislative agenda.

- **Chapter 51-BUDGET** (Senate 2501B/Assembly 3001B). Enacts the 2021-22 Judiciary Budget. Eff. 4/1/21.
- **OCA #10-FAMILY-Chapter 474** (Senate 6498/Assembly 7796). Prohibits the use of certain restraints on children appearing before Family Court. Eff. 10/8/21.
- **OCA #21-FAMILY-Chapter 798** (Senate 7179/Assembly 7681A). Relates to the reentry of former foster care children into foster care. Eff. 12/22/21
- **OCA #46-FAMILY-Chapter 456** (Senate 7172/Assembly 7601). Relates to the execution of warrants in juvenile delinquency cases when Family Courts are closed. Eff. 12/7/21.
- **OCA #48-FAMILY-Chapter 813** (Senate 7171/Assembly 7706). Relates to juvenile delinquency charges of violations in the Family Court. Eff. 12/29/21.
- **OCA #50-FAMILY-Chapter 809** (Senate 7033/Assembly 7713). Relates to pleas of guilty and removal of adolescent offender proceedings to the Family Court. Eff. 12/30/21.
- **OCA #60-CIVIL-VETOED** (Senate 7253/Assembly 7769). Provides that a foreign corporation's application for authority to do business in this state constitutes consent to jurisdiction of the courts of this state.
- **OCA #63-CIVIL-Chapter 833** (Senate 7093 / Assembly 8040). Relates to admissibility of an opposing party's statement. Eff. 12/31/21.



Albany County Supreme and County Courthouse



Acknowledgments

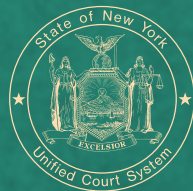
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